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BELL STREET CHAPEL DISCOURSES.

BELL STREET CHAPEL
DISCOURSES

BY

ANNA GARLIN SPENCER

CONTAINING SELECTIONS FROM THE WRITINGS OF

JAMES EDDY



PROVIDENCE, RHODE ISLAND

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PREFACE.

Bell Street Chapel was dedicated "to God, to Truth, and to all that ennobles Humanity," on the first day of December, 1889. Since that time, public worship free to all has been maintained. A Religious Society has been formed, a Resident Minister chosen, a Sunday School established, and regular Sunday services have been held for ten months each year. From time to time many noted preachers and lecturers from different parts of the country have addressed the Society. Week-day meetings of an educational, philanthropic and social character have been held from six to eight months of the year, with growing influence in the community; and many civic enterprises for the betterment of the people have been aided from this centre of thought and effort. The building and endowment were the gift of James Eddy to all who desire to help carry on the work in the spirit of the Trust, of which the Society is the beneficiary.

After ten years of such life and labor, it seems fitting to mark in some signal manner the decade milestone. The "Initial Discourses," given at the Chapel on the Sundays following the Dedication, outlining the general purposes and ideals

of the movement then inaugurated and containing selections from Mr. Eddy's writings, are reprinted and condensed in this volume, and reaffirm the reverent, rational and ethical devotion which is at the heart of all the Chapel activities.

May these discourses win a broader and more earnest support for the future of the work "for moral and religious purposes," initiated and made possible by the gift of one man and already consecrated and enlarged by the appreciative and helpful response of many people.

ANNA GARLIN SPENCER,

*Resident Minister and President of the Religious
Society of Bell Street Chapel.*

MAN'S IDEAL OF GOD.

DO you remember standing some time on the top of a high foot-hill in a mountain country? Do you remember how clearly showed the road leading to its summit, when once you had gained its point of view? And do you remember how the paths from it to other foot-hills, and from all the lower ranges toward the majestic heights of the great mountains, could be traced by the rifts in the greenness of the wooded slopes, until the solitary peaks were all linked together by the tiny roadways of man? Just such a foot-hill summit is this age of ours.

To-day "we look before and after," we trace the past in its relation to the present and the future as never before.

That which more than anything else will distinguish this century, now drawing toward its close, in future history is the rise and growth of the scientific spirit. And what do we mean by the phrase "scientific spirit?" Simply this: a free and fearless search for actual facts of nature and of human life; a careful test of all the reports concerning these facts of the universe made by man's observation; a cautious analysis,

classification and arrangement of each order of knowledge gained from these verified facts under accepted axioms or working hypotheses. In a word, the crowning distinction of our age is that now thinkers and students are dealing with things as they really are, so far as can be ascertained, without the slightest regard to what anybody has once thought things to be. The eager intellect of our time is hunting for facts, and fitting facts together to make certified knowledge, in all directions.

It is true that this scientific spirit was in some men of the ancient world, notably Aristotle; some men whose towering thought make them visible to us across the centuries as mountain peaks reveal themselves across vast stretches of level country; but to-day the leading teaching and thought of those not great are shaped, consciously or unconsciously, by this prevailing view.

Hence, as I say, we have reached an intellectual hill-top: a point of view whence we can trace the roadways of the pioneering intellect of man as they wind over summits of vision, and across fertile valleys of human effort, and among morasses of superstition, and dark places of ignorance.

And what, in brief, has been the effect of this rise and growth of the scientific spirit upon the religious consciousness of man? At first surely

a deep disturbance of fundamental faiths; or at least of mental conceptions of theology which were so closely allied to fundamental faiths that many mistook them for the grounds of religion itself. Astronomy gave us glimpses of the vast reaches of the heavens, and directly it became absurd to connect this little planet with such a stupendous tragedy as the death of a "very God." Geology made of the so-called Mosaic account of creation, so long accepted as authentic history, a poetic fancy merely. Biology made of the "fall of man" so long the centre of the Christian system of religion only a suggestive myth. While ethnology, critical history, and ethical science alike conspired to reduce the dominant dogma of the atonement of an incarnate deity for man's sins from a fact to a suggestive allegory.

As the frail shrines of religious ideals crumbled at the touch of the image-breakers, the dogmatists who resisted the oncoming influence of the time, contested valiantly every inch of ground, while the wounded sensibilities of affection cried out at every step "spare me *this* object of devotion."

I am wrong to speak as if all this was of the past: to-day the struggle, so happily over for many of us, is but just beginning in numberless hearts and minds: aye, is yet to be awakened in countless sluggish or timid natures. To most

thoughtful people, however, whether or not logically worked out to the giving up of old theologic systems and old phrasings of truth, the emphasis of religious, as of other theories and beliefs, is upon the reasonable, the universal, and the natural, rather than as of old upon the dogmatic, the partial and the supernatural.

Meanwhile the new method of enquiry has pressed closer toward the inner citadels of old beliefs. The outer details of literal readings of scripture texts, the literal following of creedal statements, and the narrow partisanship of denominational allegiance, have been surrendered by most of the more intelligent of all sects of Christendom; often with utter unconsciousness of any change in their outlook. But the relentless logic of the scientific method once accepted, there is no chance for "halt" until everything in the universe and in the consciousness of man has come under the dissecting knife of analysis. And of late years the cry has gone up, not alone from the timid and the thoughtless, but from many most profound and earnest natures, "Behold the integrity of the human soul is assailed! The immortal Hope is destroyed! Even the God in whom we trusted as the Father of our spirits, He is pushed from his throne within our hearts into the limitless spaces of the universe, and we are orphaned in a world of struggle and of sorrow."

How many of us remember to-day, with twinges of pain from the old wound, the hour when first the extremest implications of modern scientific thought burst upon our terrified consciousness. How the once solid rock of our inherited faiths crumbled beneath our feet. How desolate we stood in the pitiless noonday glare of an inquisition which spared no tender feeling, and seemed to threaten all that we had called by the name of "Spirit."

But to as many of us as met that terrible hour with simple fidelity to truth, it marks in our memory not only a new era in our intellectual growth, but a glad rebaptism of our faith in the eternal verities. For they know, perhaps best of all, they who have borne the fiery heat of such a struggle, that whosoever becomes patient outcast and willing slave for Truth's sake, learns that Truth and Righteousness and Love are One, that "One in whom man lives, and moves, and has his being."

"They bade me cast my doubt away,
They pointed to my hands all bleeding,
They listened not to all my pleading;
The thing I meant I could not say;
I knew that I should rue the day
If once I cast that doubt away.

"I grasped it firm and bore the pain;
The thorny husks I stripped and scattered;

If I could reach its heart, what mattered
If other men saw not my gain
Or even if I should be slain?
I knew the risks: I chose the pain.

“ O, had I cast that doubt away
I had not found what most I cherish,
A faith without which I should perish,—
The faith which, like a kernel, lay
Hid in the husks which on that day
My instinct would not throw away! ”

The personal struggle, however, but epitomizes the world movements. To-day we see that same fidelity to truth which in so many single lives has brought a higher faith, bringing to the general belief the same reward. To-day we mark on all sides, from the specialists of science as well as from the philosophic leaders, a tendency toward such a restatement of the philosophy of the universe as harmonizes with the essentials of all religious faith. The faith in God as the *One*, distinct from, yet immanent in, all nature, this fundamental postulate of worship, Herbert Spencer himself reaffirms when he talks of “Eternal Energy,” and begins the words with the capital letters which indicate entity, while other high thinkers not a few, enlarge and elaborate the hints of science into a system of scientific theism. However impersonalized, in the old sense of the word, may have become man's Ideal of God, that Ideal still persists;

and just now is reinforced, with a power of logic, and a confident appeal to science itself, not known before. Faith in the One in All is not only left intact, it is deepened and greatened, so that to-day the conceptions of common minds may easily mount to the poetic imaginings of the seers of all times.

And if the faith in man as a spiritual entity (as something more and other than a functional flower upon the great tree of life), if this faith, which has been supposed, at least, an essential of the highest form of moral responsibility, is not yet reinforced by the later science, it is at least not invalidated. The persistence of the individuality of a human being through the widest range of structural change testifies pretty strongly of something in man which no scalpel discovers and no physical fact explains. Those few great prophets of the soul like Emerson, who kept the faith when the multitude knew not that it was assailed, have been lately hailed chiefs by the main army of religious leadership.

And it is curious and interesting to us, who seek to set before you the more important elements of Mr. Eddy's thought upon these great themes, to trace his course along these world currents of change. I will now give you, in a selected and arranged portion of his manuscripts, the outline of his philosophical conception of the universe and of its Source.

"Much time has been spent by the human mind in the endeavor to conceive of the beginning of things. And a harmony of conclusion seems now to be arrived at, viz.: that man is not constituted in mind, body or senses to comprehend a beginning or origin of the least particle of matter or of what we call mind: and we may safely say will never be. To be in accord with human reason there must always exist an *a priori* to all thought-of beginnings. It would seem wiser, therefore, to leave the problem of creation and pass on to the consideration of questions within the scope of human intelligence.

"We perceive that organizations exist combining mind and matter or intelligence and phenomena.

"What we term spirit, or mind, is always invisible to the human senses. No man ever saw the mind of another man nor the mind of any living creature. The moving power and character of mind is known only by manifestations or phenomena. So of the mentality of the Power above the human mind, it is hidden and invisible to the human senses: but not so its manifestations, since the phenomena of nature all indicate an interior Intelligence, a great Mind in all things.

"This intermingling of mind and matter is certainly a great mystery; perhaps next to the crowning mystery of the primal origin of all

things. But in spite of the unfathomable mysteries in which we are immersed, we do know so much of the orderings of nature, of the wise guiding principles or laws of growth revealed through phenomena, that we may surely perceive the goodness and the power of some great Mind above the human. And we are constantly on the road, as experience develops us, toward the acquisition of more knowledge in all our relations with nature, with each other, and in our relations with the great mind of all substance which we call God.

“Man finds on his advent upon earth certain invariable laws in operation, which, on examination, he realizes were necessary to his birth and existence. He finds in nature, from the minutest lichen upon the rock up through the animal kingdom to man, the highest manifestation of life, that all grades of being are under the operation of these laws. And since man cannot conceive of a First Cause, the human reason is forced to fall back upon these laws as the agency of revelation of God's nature and character. Would you know the character of a man? Sum up the phenomena of words and deeds he manifests through life and you find the sum total is the man himself. We find phenomena in the universe indicating a Supreme Mind and Character. And although we cannot idealize even the Primal Power, we can comprehend, in a man-

ner, the character of the God these phenomena reveal.

“Man is the flower of all the phenomena manifested in this world. And since our finite and invisible minds are manifested to others by our works, we must believe that in the God-Mind of the universe is combined, speaking humanly, all that is noble and manly in man, united to all that is sweet and lovely in woman. Hence we may say that the noblest men and the noblest women are faint types of the character of God, and reveal that character to our comprehension.

“We are justified in believing in the existence of invisible mental Power above the human, most of all, because man himself has the power to plan in the secrecy of his own mind, and can exert influence over both substance and mind in a similar manner. And we are able to personify a casual Power, because the qualities of intelligence and of goodness are faintly but distinctly typified in the personalities of the human race!

“Let us be voluntarily grateful to that Life-giving and Life-sustaining Power which is revealed by nature and by human experience! To be religious, as I understand it, is to ascertain by careful study of the phenomena of nature and of human experience the character of the Power above humanity, Whom we call God: then to study ourselves and our relations to God and to each other. Then will come in our

religious obligations, which consist of the conscientious performance of our duties in our relations with God and of all duties in our relations with each other. To honestly perform these duties is all that could be expected of us by any Power above us; and the sincere performance of duty will enable us to become intelligent and good. Let us begin *now* the work of perfecting ourselves; for in this way shall we best perform the duty of the hour, which is to know God and ourselves.

"The error of all who sustain the popular religious systems of our day is that they oppose this divine law of progress and change. Christian theologians admit that the increase of knowledge, through experience, gives humanity progress in all things outside of religious creeds; but they believe, with more or less of sincerity, that in those narrow creeds is concentered all of truth respecting God, and man's relations with God, which it is necessary for man to know. But 'a change is coming over the spirit of their dream.' Faiths and creeds hitherto held too sacred to justify examination, are now being submitted to the investigation of common sense thinkers, who criticise them with a hardihood wounding perhaps to the sensibilities of many, who perceive with fear that 'old things are passing away and all are becoming new.' This change and dissolution of old ideas is, I think, inevitable.

One modification of accepted truth leads to another. But to me this means progress. I have placed on a panel of a door in Bell St. Chapel these words, 'Many beliefs of to-day will become the heathenisms of the future.' The same power of truth and of reason which casts from their pedestals our old faiths, will place a truer God in the heart and mind of the intelligent and good. From our knowledge of the character of the most perfect specimens of human kind it has become impossible for many to believe in the existence of a God with a character such as the popular creeds of Christianity ascribe to Him; since that character is represented by those creeds to be inferior to our best men and women in a moral point of view. In the abstract all Christian believers declare that God is wise and good; and they meet in fine churches, no doubt with the honest intent to worship and honor God. But the tendency of much which they teach is to prove that God is not wise and good; since they teach that He will torture forever an honest unbeliever; and that He finds it necessary, in establishing a Divine Revelation, to break His own laws!

"I wish it to be understood that in this criticism of Christian dogmas I do not impugn the sincerity of Christians. Many, perhaps most of them, have a higher practical standard of morality than is justified by the character of

the God they profess to imitate and worship. And to the liberal minded I would suggest that if it were possible to close all churches wherein systems of error are taught, such a course would not be desirable. In all natural processes, which are divine, changes are slow, and in consequence more sure. What we want to begin with is toleration toward each other.

"All popular religions which now prevail upon the earth, including Christianity, were founded in superstition and error. And in the Christian, as in other religious systems, some changes are absolutely necessary to fit it to our present conceptions of truth.

"Poor human nature requires a God that it can look up to : One Who possesses intelligence and goodness superior, not inferior, to the best of men ! Let us from now on consecrate our church edifices, and our own minds and hearts, to a God whom we recognize as above our highest human standard ; One whom we can love and honor with our own free will ; for this would enable us to consider the performance of our religious and moral duties the greatest privilege of life !

"And now what the writer of these lines desires above all things is to assist in founding and building up a religious society which shall be guided by the highest principles of truth and right which the mind of our day can conceive.

He aspires, by the aid of those who may sympathize with and appreciate his views, to initiate a church service which shall be modified in important respects from the old liturgies. Believing in the existence of a paternal Power he believes that we should strive to comprehend His character; and that this knowledge of God joined to a knowledge of ourselves, will enable us to understand our true relations with God and with each other. Then will be enlisted our conscience, our sense of duty, our dignity of character, and our most noble emotions to help us perform all the duties growing out of these relations with our Divine Father and with our brother man!

"We believe in God; in humility; in gratitude; and in obedience to His laws. The intelligent and good live near to God. All scientific truth is knowledge of God and His ways of wisdom and kindness.

"May we all live nearer and ever nearer to God!"

Closing thus our quotations from Mr. Eddy's writings, we note how true ran the course of his single experience to the line of the great thought-tendencies of which it was a part. Working out as he did, for himself, the great problems of religious belief, his convictions assumed to his apprehension the force and the importance of original discoveries. And his conclusions were and are both forceful and

important. Not alone or chiefly because they have the somewhat unique value of the testimony of a clear-headed practical man of affairs upon themes generally treated by scholars,—although this is an aspect not to be ignored—but because he reached by independent methods of investigation conclusions which coincide in their most essential particulars with those of many of the world's thinkers of all times.

The religious need of any time is its vital need. And to-day the great religious need is on the one hand for a religion of essentials stripped of the veiling, transient robes of outgrown creeds and traditions: and on the other hand for a revival of the religious spirit itself: for a genuine faith that it profiteth a man nothing to gain the whole world if thereby he lose his own soul of aspiration and of righteousness!

The cry goes up to-day from disturbed minds and burdened hearts, "Show us the Father!" Not the partial monarch mindful of his own glory; but the tender Heart "that is mindful of *all* his own." Not the jealous despot who reserves ingenious tortures for those who have offended him; but He, the merciful, who "removeth our transgressions from us." Not the fickle and childish sovereign who repents him of past kindnesses and recklessly disturbs the regular order of events to display his power, but "He with whom is no variableness, neither

shadow of turning," whose glory the steadfast heavens declare. Not he, the big man, who stands without his creation, turning the wheels of a mechanical universe; but He the Immanent life of all that is, the Soul of Nature, Who sleeps in the stone, flutters in the winged bird, blossoms in the flower and creeps upward, as "the ages rise and cluster," through animal to man, in whom He forever "maketh for righteousness."

" God of the granite and the rose !
Soul of the sparrow and the bee !
The mighty tide of being flows
Through countless channels, Lord, from Thee.
It leaps to life in grass and flowers ;
Through every grade of being runs ;
Till from creation's radiant towers
Its glory flames in stars and suns."

By thought and by experience alike men and women have climbed upon such mounts of vision to-day that they realize as never before that God is Spirit, and must be worshipped in spirit, not with forms or symbols or childish idol-creeks.

And in the light of this thought how worse than foolish, how hurting to the true faith which is at the heart of religion, seem the hair-splitting differences, the quarrels over vestments, and statements, and sacraments, and traditions ! How small the bickerings which divide the church of God into contending factions ! How

suicidal seems the sectarian's bigotry, in a world where little children are born to wretchedness and sin, where strong men fail because of sickness and death, where struggle and toil and sorrow are ever calling for succor and for help! "Verily," saith Jesus of old, "not he that crieth Lord, Lord, but he that doeth the will of My Father " is the true annointed.

The wave of changing thought which has passed over our age has left unchanged the root elements of human nature. It makes small difference whether we call God by this name, or that, or in self-distrustful reverence hold ourselves dumb before His presence. We want, as all men and women in all times have wanted, more than we want anything else, to feel some "peace of trust which passeth understanding." When life grows difficult, when trouble disturbs youth's joyousness, when sin appals, when cowardice hinders, when temptation assails, when the loved dead answer not again, when friends misunderstand, and the world seems at odds with our ideal, then we would escape from the seen and temporal into the unseen and eternal Perfection.

And not in weakness or in sorrow alone do we need strong faith in the One in All. We are sketched on a large pattern, we incomplete and imperfect mortals. Nothing contents either thought or feeling but the Infinite.

We are haunted in the heights as in the depths of our natures by visions which allure to endless aspiration. That "Something deeply interfused" in nature, which calms our trembling nerves and steadies our feverish pulses, witnesseth to the "central peace at the heart of endless agitation." That leap of the exultant mind when a new truth is revealed, is evidence that we are of one substance with the Eternal Energy and can "think God's thought after him."

The deep religious need of our time is that we free this permanent spirit of religion from all that dwarfs and hinders it; that we in sincerity and courage declare the new readings upon the scroll of time; and above all, that we translate the old comfort, the old call to righteousness, the old God-ward search, in terms of the newer thought.

And if this little movement here be only the frailest and humblest of efforts in this direction it has the high sanction of most holy use!

GRATITUDE:

—AND—

TRUST IN THE POWERS ABOVE.

“WE believe in God,” says Mr. Eddy, “and in gratitude. Our truest relations with God ask from us humility, gratitude and love. The purest and sweetest essence of true Religion lies in its confiding simplicity of character.” And again he said in words dictated only a week before he died, “Man’s true worship is gratitude and love for the gift of life and all that we receive. Let us be voluntarily grateful to God; there is no higher duty nor higher motive than gratitude for obeying the behests of a pure religion and morality.

“Life is a free gift to man, from a higher power existing antecedent to man’s advent to this world. So we are of divine origin! Life is costless to us, but priceless. There is no doubt of the unequal value of life to babes who receive it; but we must not forget that the parents themselves create or furnish the conditions of health and well-being, or otherwise, under which we are

born. The power, the gift of life is from God; the conditions under which we are born are created by man, and appertain to his liberty of will.

“To be grateful for favors received from others is natural and sensible; and when we can make no return for favors received then is our gratitude enhanced. Wholly do we stand in this light toward God, the author of our existence; for we can render no equivalent for all we receive from his power and goodness. The best and most acceptable return we can make to God is to enjoy life rationally and fully; which would harmonize with God’s will and intent toward us. Gratitude, like other good sentiments of our minds, should be cultivated. A study of our relations to each other teaches us that parents, children, brothers and sisters, husbands and wives, have mutual natural claims upon each other to be unselfish. This inspires gratitude, and a mutual disposition to make returns where it is possible. And where it is not possible to give equivalents for favors received, there is one return which in justice should be made, and that is gratitude. And ingratitude toward those from whom we have received disinterested favors has always been considered a crime. But God has a character so noble that the persistent force of his love is not affected either by gratitude or ingratitude. From the character of God we get the idea that ‘virtue is its own reward.’

God being personally invisible, he acts through proxies or agents. On a panel of a door in Bell Street Chapel I have caused to be inscribed these words, 'The infant smiles not upon its mother, but God smiles through the infant.' Now, by the power of our hearts to feel, by the power of our minds to perceive, we will love our mothers, children, and all our near and dear relations, because such is the will of God. But let us acknowledge that our deepest love, honor and gratitude are due to that divine Power, the giver of life and of all well-being, who is behind all and in all that we esteem as the most precious in life.

"God does not require this worship. God has no need of the praise, homage, love or gratitude of man. But man has great need of exercising all these sentiments towards God. With an intelligent and just man the cherishing and the expression of these sentiments is a necessity; a demand of conscience. The exquisite satisfaction we derive from them constitutes our highest privilege of experience. And it is reasonable to conclude that since the highest happiness and well-being of man, and of all created beings, is the end and aim of the activities of the high power above man, so the free expression of gratitude from man toward this high power should give satisfaction to the great mind and heart of God himself. He could not

feel such satisfaction, however, if he required of us any exercise of worship; for this requirement would be derogatory both to his dignity and to ours.

“No man that respects himself would beg to be praised or honored, however praiseworthy or honorable he might be. Conscious of his own integrity he would let his character speak for itself in his acts. If he were not appreciated, he would exercise the virtue of modesty, and wait patiently until the distinction and honor due him should be voluntarily paid. Now in regard to the God of wisdom and beneficence, we may be sure that his dignity and self-respect are not less than that of a good and intelligent man in this particular. No equivalent for a gift can be properly required from the parties benefited; all return must be voluntary on the part of recipients; but there exists in the human mind a sense of justice, a feeling that there *should* be some recognition of favors bestowed. If ingratitude is a crime, the feeling and expression of gratitude is a simple duty. Grateful feelings should be as common as favors received; but a high-minded, good man will not withhold favors and charity because of the lack of thanks or gratitude from the recipients. And in the laws of God, while all crimes against our fellow-men are punished with unpleasant effects with reformatory intents, for ingratitude to God, who

is the real author of our existence and of all the blessings comprised in life, there is no special punishment; no more than there is for a lack of homage or love toward Him or for non-conception of His existence. His sun shines on all, and no laws giving happiness to man are suspended for the punishment of the atheist or the ingrate.

“Gratitude, then, is the first return we can and should make to God for His great gifts to us. But do we owe anything else to God for the manifold blessings of life? Yes, we owe, and I think heaven can make, another, and a most important return to God, the divine Father; *we can obey His will as we ascertain it* and so further His intents and purposes of righteousness in this world. How may we do this? By learning the laws He has instituted for the government of man and of all nature. These laws being instituted for our best good, an intelligent self-interest would lead us to obey them. But there is a higher reason, even gratitude; a principle of high honor towards Him who has so richly endowed and blessed us. Should we not gladly obey our best friend? Gratitude towards human beings who have aided us in kindness we all admit to be a duty; and any service possible to render to one who has thus kindly aided us would be at once cheerfully given by every rightminded man. Can there be a doubt, then,

that we owe God gratitude, and obedience to His will and ascertained laws? It is a great principle of duty to make ourselves and each other as happy as possible; always in subservience to reason, common sense, and the high sentiments of truth and virtue.

“My strong faith is in the perfect righteousness and goodness of God! I do not believe there exists in nature, or in human life, as constituted, anything to justify us in an arraignment of the Power or Powers above the human. The governing laws and principles which we recognize in the manifestations of nature are all beneficent. The mass of mankind have thought and acted like badly made up children respecting their relations with God: crying and begging, fearful or hopeful, troublesome towards each other, and demanding great patience from their Divine parent! God’s gift of life, and all the happiness which life may comprise, has been full, rich and free; no onerous conditions attach to it. Whether we acknowledge the existence and goodness of God or not, His disinterested paternal kindness will not be withheld from man or from any living creature!

“Therefore our relation to God *should* be one of love and veneration. We should humbly acknowledge the existence and divine power of our first and greatest friend, that great Spirit of intelligence and goodness which called us into

being. It is not necessary in order to cherish these sentiments of love and gratitude that we should perceive in our minds a *personality*. We know of no personality higher than the human. But since mentality exists in all the operations of nature, and in all the qualities and powers of human life, we may look up, each in his own way, to the Source of all things in trust and confidence!

"The true religion is one of faith in an infinite Righteousness and Love, and the working out of these principles of the Divine Nature in human life!"

Closing thus our quotations from Mr. Eddy's writings we are confronted with the problems and difficulties which beset so many of us. Not to all is it given to feel such "strong faith in the perfect righteousness and goodness of God" that they never arraign the conduct of this world under His laws. The "duty of gratitude" seems to many very questionable; the "trust in the powers above" very difficult, in so troubled and incomplete a world as ours. "Gratitude for life," these would say, "when it is one long struggle, one constant pain, one succession of disappointments? Gratitude for one's own life when every one calls it a failure? Gratitude for the life of nearest kin when sin and shame and anxiety are the links which bind them to us? Gratitude for life as a whole; for

mankind with its feet rooted in bestiality ; for mankind, still showing the 'tooth and claw of nature' as the fight for selfish advantage goes on? 'Trust in the powers above' that all is well with us all, is well with the world, when the Ideal within is mocked and tortured every day with the 'pain and wrong enthroned below?' " Ah, when we say in greatest strength of faith "we believe," the response of doubt's weakness presses quick, "Help thou my unbelief." Yet, mark it well, the experience of mankind has shown that along the ways of gratitude and trust lie *soul-health* and *soul-power*.

Let us look at two lives, true pictures of this fact of human experience.

There was a woman dowered at birth with exceptional advantages. Her ancestry for generations had been clean, high-minded, talented and cultivated people, of comfortable means. She, flowered upon this stock, had rare talent, and a brilliancy of intellect which made her one of the most remarkable women in this country. Early in life she married a good and honorable man whose devotion to her was an adoration ; so that she was enfolded with love and appreciation as with an atmosphere. A child came to bless their home, a beautiful boy, reproducing her own brilliant attractions. She had wealth and travel and leisure in which to grow her uttermost. And the real nobility of her nature kept her

from stagnation and frivolity, so that her life was an inspiration to many ; her days were rich with high labors ; and her home a centre of intellectual and artistic enjoyment. One day Death, which had spared her when he had snatched many treasures from those less blessed, knocked at her door, as sooner or later he will at each hut and palace. And this beloved wife became a widow. In an hour the whole current of her life was changed. She shut herself away from the world, denied herself to friends, closed her heart against the appeals of charity to which before she had carelessly but generously responded. She shut herself in to an unresigned desolation which she felt was greater than any other soul had known.

Her son lived, when the wail of bereaved mothers ceases not upon the earth ; but she felt no joy even in that. In her seclusion the large property left her by her husband was mismanaged by the man to whom he entrusted its care ; and this woman awoke one morning to find herself, not a poor, but no longer a rich woman. Every comfort was still hers, while many women as delicate and as sensitive as she toiled for bread and were rudely swept by every breath of fortune ; but for her comforts she gave no thanks. Disaster following upon bereavement turned her weak sorrow into a bitterness which spoiled her home life, appalled her best friends, and turned

her clear logic and fine wit into harsh railings and stinging sarcasm. A blight fell upon her intellectual nature itself. Diseased at the root of being, looking at all the world through the distorted vision of a selfish resistance to fate, the end of that brilliant creature was a fretfulness and a complaining restlessness akin to insanity.

I know another women, gifted not so highly, but still exceptionally favored in birth, breeding and opportunity. She too married young, and in her case the husband, an artist of exquisite nature, was to her the embodied beauty and inspiration of the universe; while she to him became rest, and support and all-surrounding care. Death early widowed her. And no one who knew her could doubt that the blow struck to the very centre of her being. But she turned bravely to the lonely duties and pleasures left for her. On their child, a daughter who inherited much of the best of both father and mother, she lavished the tenderness which this chief bereavement and the loss of most of her near kindred forced into one channel. And out into the world of intellectual work and of philanthropic effort she pressed with a vigor unknown before. When the daughter was grown a young woman of exceptional gifts and powers, she too was suddenly taken away. Those who knew the rare bond between the two said, "How can the

mother bear this loss?" With just a little pause to gather strength after the sudden blow, all the old pursuits were resumed, all the old friends welcomed, and the old work for the sorrowful and needy of the world redoubled, and with a tenderness and sweetness of spirit excelling anything witnessed in her before. More than this; not to keep the house a grave of buried hopes, a young man needing sorely its shelter and help, a student in a neighboring college, was taken to live with her. The pathos of this woman's patient smile, the deep lines in the sweet face, the marks of sorrow's aging hand upon the bodily frame, these alone testified how heavy had been the stroke. And an increase in breadth and insight of sympathy, a deeper and higher consecration of all life's gifts and opportunities, testified to the enrichment of sorrows patiently and unselfishly borne. Now who of us can doubt that of those two women, she who in gratitude and trust, in self-forgetting and patience made the best of everything life brought her, was *right*; and she who in angry revolt at sorrows and troubles common to all, threw away all of comfort and blessing that remained to her, was *wrong*?

And as we use these words, signifying moral responsibility and ethical quality, do we not show our underlying conviction that gratitude and trust are *duties*, not merely tempera-

mental peculiarities or accidental states of mind?

It is true that temperament and outward conditions have much to do with cheerfulness. But there is such a thing, as the ancient poet says, as "putting forth all our strength to exalt the Lord, and justify His ways," and with success.

Do you remember that poet David Wasson, a man of such rarely individualized mental power that no popular success could come to him, and one at whose life a distressing spinal disease dragged until it smote him with blindness, do you remember how he, who had surely tasted some of life's disappointments and hardships, wrote for us?—

" Ask and receive—'tis sweetly said;
Yet what to plead for know I not;
For Wish is worsted, Hope o'ersped,
And aye to thanks returns my thought.
If I would pray, I've naught to say
But this, that God may be God still,
For him to live is still to give,
And sweeter than my wish his will.

O wealth of life beyond all bound,
Eternity each moment given !
What plummet may the Present sound?
Who promises a *future* heaven?
Or glad or grieved, oppressed, relieved,
In blackest night or brightest day,
Still pours the flood of golden good
And more than heartful fills me aye."

"Ah but," you may say, "these you speak of were exceptional people. They knew the delights of that intellectual life which furnishes the best antidote to sorrow and trouble that human nature knows. And one had the poet's temperament, the exaltation of genius. But what of the commonplace people, the ordinary sick and crippled, the dwarfed in mind, the abnormal in development? What of the fragmentary, even the loathsome, of the children of men?" Ah, friends, I speak not here as "one who hath attained." I feel with George Eliot "the exceeding difficulty of human life." I walk through the world's hospitals for diseased minds and bodies with a shuddering sense of the terrible facts of human experience. I hear amid the joyful psalms of praise which heal and lift my soul the undertone of earth's travail pains, the "low, sad music of" suffering "humanity." And I know, as most of you do also, the weight of cares and anxieties my trust cannot always carry serenely. Nay, more than this, I see how the element in human nature which rebels against bad and hurting things, which revolts against "the slings and arrows of outrageous fortune," I see how that element in human nature is closely allied to the "divine discontent" which leads the race upward toward better conditions and so toward better living. I recognize that not alone should Pippa's song be sung—

“ God’s in His heaven
All’s right with His world,”

not only that, but the clarion call to ourselves make this world better and safer and happier for all the tempted and weak and oppressed ; *ourselves*, with all our might, as though we alone must do it.

But however these two great principles of life—gratitude for the present and trust for the future, and the reformer’s impatience at existing ills and haste to mend them,—however these two great principles may at times clash in the interpretation of human history, in the conduct of the single life they need strike no discord. We have right and duty to “covet earnestly the best gifts,” and get rid of all avoidable ills of life. But if the wisdom of experience teaches us anything it is this,—that when a personal trouble cannot be pushed away it must be borne patiently, sweetly, heroically, or it will kill the best life of the soul. The wisdom of experience teaches us that those who rail against fate, who resist with bitter complaint the sorrows and disasters which come upon them, neither grow in the beauty of holiness, nor are strong to help others. And if we cannot trust in confidence to righteousness and love at the heart of things we cannot keep our true sanity. That is *sure*, if experience makes anything sure both to our

thought and feeling. With doubt of the moral order of the universe we lose grip upon our own unity of consciousness, lose hold upon all other natures for succor and help. Feeble and struggling may be our faith, choked with many a burdening weight, but its life is our life. I believe that Mr. Eddy's thought was profoundly true when he defined true religion as "faith in an infinite Righteousness and Love, and the working out of these principles of the Divine Nature in human life."

And this, too, I believe, that the seal of high usefulness, such as is set upon trust in the powers above that shape our lives, seal of high usefulness in personal growth and in world helpfulness, is never set upon a *lie*. If faith in Righteousness and Goodness at the heart of things makes for self-bettering and kindly helpfulness as it surely does, and doubt of the eternal justice and love works madness and leads to selfishness as it surely does, then faith is true to the actual fact, and doubt here is *falsehood* as well as *suicide*!

Who are they whom you seek in trouble? Who are they who bear on their hearts as on eagle's pinions, the feeble uplooking of weaker ones? Who are "they who suffer, and grow strong" to succor the afflicted? Who are they whose sympathy can most surely be counted on, whose love is bravest, whose work for the least

of their brethren is most radiantly hopeful? Is it not those who in this incomplete and struggling world have surest faith that "God is on the field when He seems most invisible?" Is it not those who meet their own trials most bravely and serenely, who resign with patience cherished dreams and hopes when the call comes, who wear overmore "a smile where tears have run?"

Ah, not as these who have attained dare I speak; but this I know full well, these saints of the blessed life show us the way of truth, the way of beauty, the way of peace and sweetest helping! And this, too, I know, that such saintship comes not only by nature; it is also the gift of grace, the grace of striving for that which is above. Such saints are *made* as well as born. If always we seek for the good in our own lot and in the world-condition, and magnify that, nor dwell hopelessly on the dark side, we acquire more and more a *habit* of gratitude and trust, a soul-attitude that makes for this saintship. If we resolutely shut out selfish dwelling upon pain and weariness we shall not only sooner cease to burden other lives with our bodily weakness, we shall also the sooner attain what command of our bodies is possible to us. This is the real "mind-cure," the enduring truth under the transient "craze" of our time.

Nay, deeper than all, if we feed our souls

upon the faith of those who have seen of the travail of their souls and been satisfied; if we realize that in this as in all other matters connected with the conduct of life "there is cast up a highway" for our soul's ascent; then, when we are overwhelmed by our own poor doubts we can "stretch lame hands of faith," and find the "world's great altar stairs which slope through darkness up to God."

There is no gift so great in all this world as he bestows upon his fellows who "walks in the light and lets his light shine." It makes not the smallest difference how he phrases his faith or how he thinks he comes by it. He may not only picture its Source in most ancient wordings, but hang childish ornament of miracle-story and mistaken symbolism upon it. Or he may fear to do aught but hint its origin in mysteries he does not try to translate in terms of common speech. The only essential is that like a flower he face upward and "widen for others the skirts of light."

Saints of the Blessed Life! They are many! They are rich and poor: wise and simple: learned and untaught: of favorable circumstance, sometimes,—oftener, perhaps, tried as by fire with great afflictions. As one I once knew:—who was crippled to helplessness; poor to hurting dependence; bereft of all near helpers save one sister who was blind and one who was

a querulous, nervous invalid ; and who moreover bore in her heart the sorrowful consciousness that her own and her sisters' ills were the fruit of a loved father's wrongdoing:—and yet who was the cheer and comfort of a whole village because she trusted and was glad in the everlasting Strength and Perfection !

Saints of the Blessed Life ! Would we might all be such !

“ Thou Life within my life, than self more near !
Thou veiled Presence infinitely dear !
From all my nameless weariness I flee
To find my centre and my rest in Thee.
Take part with me against these doubts that rise
And seek to throne thee far in distant skies !
Take part with me against this self that dares
Assume the burden of these sins and cares !
How shall I call thee who art always here,—
How shall I praise thee who art still most dear,—
What may I give thee save what thou hast given,—
And whom but thee have I in earth or heaven.”

HOW RELIGIONS GROW.

“EVERY intelligent, conscious, human being,” said Mr. Eddy, “requires and must have a religion. Man himself, acting individually and collectively, has instituted every religion that ever existed or that now exists. The philosopher may observe that the rationality in the creeds of every religion of every age has corresponded to the degree of general intelligence existing in the human mind at the time of their adoption. And the creed, belief and general character of each and every religion corresponds with the supposed character of God and the supposed nature of man’s relations to God at the time of its adoption. God being invisible to our sense, the human mind has idealized Him in various forms and symbols.

“As children we naturally conform to the belief of the character of God, of his laws, and of our relation to him, which our parents hold and assure us is the simple, solemn truth. We are all born into our religion as we are into all other conditions and faculties which grade us in creation. It is the will of God that mankind universally should be born into the love and

affection of their parents, rather than into any especial faith and belief in regard to himself. And he relies upon Mahometans, Jews, Chinese, Indians and Christians alike, to give sincerely to their children the best material and mental food they can command in all unselfish kindness. And that is just what is being done to-day in our world, has always been done, and will continue to be until the end of time. God will not interfere either to eradicate human errors or to increase human knowledge, save by and through the operation of laws fixed in the constitution of things. To man's more or less evolved intelligence at every given period of human growth is left the ascertainment and teaching of religious as of other truth.

"Wonderful discoveries have been made by the human intellect. But man's progress is slow both mentally and physically. The prevailing faith of one period of time has been rejected by the succeeding one; but in these changes there have been no abrupt transitions. One faith or system of religion has gradually dissolved into another like *Daguerre's* dissolving views. Owing to this slowness of growth, and the often blurred views of religious matters which these changes give, it is often hard for a young person to know what to believe.

"As some trees in a forest dominate others in height and wide extent of branches, so in every

age of the world there are a few men who rise in intellectual power above the masses and become conspicuous in various lines of thought and action. The love of truth is stronger in these men than in the average of mankind, and they therefore seek with earnestness to winnow truth from the inherited errors of superstition. The intelligent and honest investigations of these strong minds lead the way to transitions of growth.

"To represent God as partial in his beneficence to those who have accepted a special form of belief, while honest and good men and women who accept another as more consistent with their reason are punished by Him, is to represent Him as an unreasonable being, and to cultivate selfish feeling in those who consider themselves His favorites. These views of God's partiality must pass away.

"We are now in a transition state; and it is as true to say that we have always been in a transition state. And altho' it is permitted to man to organize for the support of many institutions which have outlived their real usefulness, no human organization or decree can prevent the progress of the human mind, however ignorance and superstition may retard that progress. The idea of God, of a higher power than man, will, I believe, never be eradicated from the mind of man: but by the training and cultiva-

tion of reason and science that idea is becoming enlarged and refined as man progresses in intelligence and civilization. It has already become perceptibly refined and enlarged from the old and grosser forms of the Christian faith; and all the foundations of that faith are being now examined and reflected upon; and slowly but surely the truths of science will dispel the clouds of misconception and error which now obscure the real truths of religion. Surely we are justified in looking for progress toward perfection in all things appertaining to humanity, in our religious views and systems of faith as well as in all other departments of human thought and activity.

"We want the Christian to modify his ancient faith, but not to change those feelings and affections of the heart which have been cultivated and advanced while the reason has lain dormant. Christians have clung to the Bible as a perfect rule of faith and practice. In face of scientific discoveries which have disproved their doctrines, they have still believed they had the whole truth. Every scientific man believes in *all the truth that is in the Bible* but no one is justified in believing that *all of the Bible is true*. And in regard to the prevailing faith in what are called miracles, I would say that I do not believe that the laws of nature, which are wisely established by a higher power than man, were ever

broken or interfered with by God. And any system of religion that requires miracles to establish it is not worth sustaining. If such interference with established laws were possible to any God as is narrated in the holy books of many religions it would prove no religious principle. A miracle, if true, would have no moral quality whatever. To perform a miracle, in the ordinary sense of that word, would be to prove only how much folly could be attached to power! And we do not reverence God or Devil simply because they are powerful. Power must be associated with goodness and intelligence to command our respect and worship.

“As the mind and heart are most affected in music by sweet and simple melodies, so the human soul is most moved in religious sentiments by the simplest principles of religion. On a tablet in Bell Street Chapel is this inscription: ‘The intelligent and good live near to God.’ I believe that is true, and will always remain so. In the human soul are the possibilities of approximation to the Divine Mind; and the qualities of intelligence of mind and goodness of heart should always be united in humble imitation of the character of God. We are God’s children, the offshoots, so far as we know, of His best thoughts. To perceive and appreciate His intelligence and goodness should be as easy as to breathe; and would be so if our minds and

hearts were attuned to nature as they might be.

"The religions of the world may be likened to a forest of beautiful and stately trees, round which have grown the briars and heavy underwood of superstition and prejudice. Our men of science, and our great religious pioneers, like Emerson, Parker and Channing, have done much to clear away the parasitic growth of noisome weeds and the clogging underbrush which ignorance has cherished around the roots of these great trees of religion. These pioneers need themselves to be watched; and must be guided by reason, by justice, and by patience, for they act as engineers and directors for a host of levelers and workers. The tall and grand old trees which represent our various types of religion may be left to grow; their taproots run down deeply in the soil of human needs and sentiments; but we should prune away those limbs of superstitious errors that prevent the sunlight of Truth from penetrating to cheer our minds and hearts. Let us not attempt to destroy these trees of human faith! Let us trim them, and beautify them, and when they gradually decay they will be replaced by the newer faiths which we in our generation believe and teach to our children."

We close here our quotations from Mr. Eddy's thought respecting the subject of our present discussion.

How Religions Grow! The words suggest a natural process rather than a supernatural revelation. And hence the very title of this discourse outlines a point of view which differs from that of many good people in this community. To many, perhaps to most people, religion does not seem a part of man's natural development, but a gift to man from without; a special revelation, not in his own nature but externally, from God. To many, perhaps to most people, only the most secular parts of religious history seem proper subjects for critical study: the substance of religion itself is to be accepted without debate from the written record of some Bible which to them is literally inspired, as other books, however true, cannot be. To many, perhaps to most Christians, the word religion has slight meaning outside of its Christian significance. All that is called religion outside of Christianity is to such a "heathenism" to be exchanged for the real path of spiritual growth; not an undeveloped but authentic passage to the Temple of the Soul. To many, perhaps to most Christians, there is something too sacred for investigation, too perfect for criticism, in the views of truth and duty which they think they find in the Bible, and which are woven into their religious consciousness by the traditions of their church beliefs. Other beliefs, all the other world-religions, seem to them of human origin; the

Christian religion seems alone divine in its source, omnipotent in its power of salvation and uplift. And to most people the proof of this special power of Christianity rests not so much upon the facts of actual experience in Christian living to-day as upon the account of miracles attending the birth and life of one to them a God-man. And so to many, Christianity to-day is not so much loving discipleship of a good man Jesus, as mystical relationship with the unique Christ.

To us who seek to build here a little chapel of worship to the All-Father, such a narrow view of religion as this has passed from our minds long ago "as a tale that is told." We believe with the ancient Persian poet that "The paths to God are more in number than the breathings of created beings." We believe with Paul, the great apostle of the Christian faith itself, that "God giveth to all life and breath and *all things*; and that he hath made of one blood all nations of men to dwell on all the face of the earth; that they should seek the Lord if haply they might feel after Him and find Him, though He is is not far from every one of us; for in Him we live and move and have our being." We believe with Peter, another apostle of early Christianity, that "God is no respecter of persons; but in every nation he that feareth God and worketh righteousness is accepted of

Him." We believe with Jesus himself that all "the pure in heart see God." We believe with the Hindu poet that "Altar flowers are of many species, but all worship is one." We believe with the modern scientific teacher Tyndall, that "there are such things woven into the texture of man as the feeling of Awe, Reverence, Wonder, the love of the beautiful, physical and moral, in Nature, Poetry and Art. There is also that deepset feeling which, since the earliest dawn of history, and probably for ages prior to all history, incorporated itself into the religions of the world." And we see that Plutarch spoke truly when he said "If we traverse the world it is possible to find cities without walls, without letters, without kings, without wealth, without coin, without schools and theatres; but a city without a temple or that practiseth not worship, prayer, or the like, no one ever saw."

To us then it has become clear that religion is the great whole of which special religions, Christianity as well as all others, are but the parts. It has become clear to us that religion is witness to certain elements of worship and right-living universal in human nature. And we see clearly that this universal element in man, out of which all religion is born, is subject to the same personal limitations, to the same laws of development from the lower toward the

higher, as that of every other human faculty of perception and of attainment. And that enables us to see clearly, what otherwise would make us confused, that while the All-perfect dwells near each heart, no one can see Him save through his own limiting vision; and no one can know the ways of His working save through his own small measure of enlightenment. And what is true of the individual nature is equally true of those systems of belief and conduct which we call the religions of the world. "The great Religions of the world," says T. W. Higginson, "are but larger sects."

What then is the Source of this universal religion of man of which Christianity is but a part? It is not in Bibles, or Church-canon, or Miracle-stories. It is in the great powers of nature to which we stand related; in the Laws of being, but half understood, which bruise us as we in ignorance and sin stray from our true orbit. Its Source is in the Mysteries which encompass us about, "things nameless which in passing touch us so" close, we cringe in terror, or are lifted to reverence, according as we are weak or strong. Its Source is in the tokens of the hidden Life of All that is. The realities of the spiritual existence are the Source of religion. And the impression which these make upon us, the outlook and the uplook which these give us, are what makes *our* religion.

Looked at in this large way, do you not see how impossible it is to believe that religion is confined to any one form of expression? Do you not see how impossible this view makes it to say of all the great world-faiths by which millions of human beings have sought and found comfort and moral growth, to say of all the great world-faiths outside of Christianity, these be *false* religions and Christianity is alone the true faith? If, as now seems true, religion's essence be the sense of each soul's relation to the universal Soul of all things; and if, as now seems true, religion's *form* be of necessity to each soul, that soul's individual perception of this universal, then no one can say to another, "I have religion and you have it not." But each must say, "I have a part, *my* part; you have another, *your* part, of that which the world of human spirits cannot contain, the All in All."

And history teaches, what this philosophy shows, that man *has* found God in various ways, that man *has* shaped his religion in various forms; forms not so unlike each other if studied critically and without prejudice that one can say their difference is of kind, but only of degree, and characteristic. And history shows us also that man everywhere, so soon as he had set his religion in form, supposed he had got into it the whole of Truth and of Right. We find that the same miracle-stories which Christianity, as an

external system of faith, has built itself upon, have been told of and believed by every other religious system to be the guarantees of its genuineness and power. And we see, more and more as science shows us the Unity and the Inviolability of Law, that all such tales are to be explained as the natural effect of great personalities and extraordinary events upon the excited imagination of superstitious and unlearned people, and not accepted as authentic history. More and more is it becoming impossible for thinking people to see in Nature or in human history anything but a revelation of regular order and steady natural development. And this modern way of looking at things is leading us all, whether we perceive it or not, to look at religion as natural and universal rather than as supernatural and partial.

How then have Religions, the differing special expressions of this natural and universal human endowment, how then have Religions grown? Not from the top down, so that we must look backward for our Eden and our Golden Age, but from the bottom up, so that "all before us gleams truth's campfires: we ourselves must pilgrims be." How have Religions grown? Not from the Perfect Word spoken by God from Heaven, and written by his own hand upon human parchments, to be worshiped ever after as the absolute truth, but by the stammering

speech of men, as they have "stood God-conquered with face upward to the sky;" by men of all times, and of all peoples, as they have sought with struggle and in joy to "tell the tale" the universe has told to them. How have Religions grown? Not by the Tables of the Righteous Law given in the Sinai thunders of one sacred mountain, to one race of men only, but by the Law of Conduct written on the tablets of men's hearts everywhere; and deciphered slowly through the long ages as life's needs, life's desires, life's loves and hates, its joys and sorrows, have taught man the "sacred Ought" of conscience. How have Religions grown? Not only, not chiefly even, by the great offices of Saints, Sages and Seers who earliest spoke its Word, and best lived its Life, but by the strain and stress of lowly and humble lives, by those who in every nation and in all times have eagerly sought their little truth, have earnestly followed their feeble right, have loved with all their childish hearts the best they knew! These, the humble and unknown, have made the soil and climate wherein those fair and stately flowers of humanity, whose names have been given to earth's Religions, have grown in beauty and in strength!

Be not afraid, my friend to whom these thoughts are new. Do not fear that aught you ever loved in your own faith will perish when it is seen to

be not a unique blessing but one of a family of heavenly gifts!

Religion is no hot-house plant, to be killed with the first breath of frosty air brought by a new wave of thought. Religion is no hot-house plant; altho man's childish play with sacred things of life has forced it often into abortive and unnatural growths. It is a plant of the open air; of the traveled highway; of the desert and the mountain wilds; and of the walled city as well. The special system of religion *we* have inherited, that complex faith, product of many elements of most diverse life which we call Christianity, what is its history? It was planted, a seed of pregnant meaning, in the open plains where our Aryan forefathers sang hymns of praise to the "Heaven-Father." It was named with interlacing and intricate tracery of nature-worship and pantheistic philosophy, by the Greek life which gave us Art and the poetic hint of modern science. It was nursed at the hearth-fire of ancestor-worship, and of the hero-worship into which ancestor-worship grew, in the "Ancient City," by the Roman life which gave us law and civic autonomy; and the human element, the germ of the Christ-idea, in religion, as well. It crossed its seed for richer fertilization with the majestic rugged monotheism of the higher Judaism; that faith which like a lonely pine in the desert stood for one growing

beauty in a harsh and barren civilization, as it testified "Behold the Lord our God is one God! Worship ye Him with the whole heart!"

This complex religious inheritance of ours which men call Christianity, was tended to new and wonderful growth, its leavings were multiplied for the healing and delight of many nations, by that Great Gardener of the Soul, Jesus of Nazareth. Not a God was he to know all things. Not a great philosopher to teach all the shadings of truth. Not even an exact guide in all the complicated duties of modern social relation. Just a man among men; with the deficiencies of his time-vision, with the incompleteness of every human receptacle of Divine Life. But one who so mingled the ethical passion with the glad trust in God as a Heavenly Father, that he seems to me the most helpful teacher of religion for the most varied sorts of people, of any the world has known. How mightily under his hand spread the real life of religion! How thick as leaves in autumn fell from its ancient branches the out-worn traditions and gaudy trappings of the plant of faith he tended! But Ah, the pity of it, how soon, when his immediate touch was gone, his simple faith of love to God and love to man was buried under the rubbish of wordy theologies! The name of him who was great, not so much in the theory or science of religion as in its *Practical Art*, was used to

blaspheme with in the temple; to blaspheme against the Holy Spirit of religion, while men bowed low before the letter that killeth.

The name of him who lost his life in trying to teach men that "the kingdom of heaven is within" was straightway used to cover a vast system of external forms and of secular power which for ages nearly crushed out the distinctive life of Christianity!

Almost, not quite: the faith which is woven into the tissues of our complex civilization still holds the kernel of ever renewing life. The kernel of that life which is *one*, altho' from every hundred men who profess to be Christians you may get as many definitions of Christianity.

Says F. W. Robertson: "All true unity is manifold. Identical feelings find countless forms of expression." And what Lowell says of "nations" is preëminently true of Religions:

" Each has its own message from on high
For the fulfillment and delight of man.
One has to teach that Labor is divine,
Another Freedom, and another mind.
And all that God is open-eyed and just,
The happy centre and calm heart of all."

The word which Christianity, more than any other world-religion, was formed to teach is still a living word.

And all the world around, at least once a

year, when the Christmas chimes ring, "Peace on earth ; Good will to Men," that central Word of Christianity is passed along from sheltered nursery to darkest prison-house of sin, that Word which Jesus spoke, "Behold, God is our Father, and all we are brethren."

And why does distinctive Christianity live, persist under changes which make its outward form over unnumbered times? Because it is named after one called Christ, and has a sacred book we call the Bible? Because God fosters its growth in ways peculiar and different from those common to all plants of human aspiration and upward striving? Not for such small and childish reasons. Our inherited faith lives to-day because in spite of its misshapen branches, and its gnarled spots of human frailty and error, it has part and lot in that everlasting life of the soul, "which is hid with Christ," as it has been hid with Buddha and with other great seers of religion, "in God." The name of our inherited faith is an incident of human language; its changing fortune the fashion of this world which passeth away. Only that in it which was alive before it was named, and which could survive all new naming in any future, is the permanent and essential part. Said St. Augustine, "What is now called the Christian religion has existed among the ancients, and was not absent from the beginning of the human race

until Christ came in the flesh; from which time the true religion, which already existed, began to be called Christian." And we who have learned more than St. Augustine could know of the unity of law and the unity of human nature, may well say, without fear, that when the universal spirit of religion outgrows for any single worshipper, or for the world's temples, the special names by which it has been called, still its life will be that which was, and is and shall be forever more; the upward look, the self-purification, the world-helpfulness which all Religions have hinted.

Our subject is, "How Religions Grow." This problem fibres itself upon the deeper one, how does that inner life of faith and service which is the heart of all Religions, grow? In the external sense, the spirit of religion which is common to all systems of world-faiths grows in the joining of what is excellent in one to what is excellent in another; grows by the large outlook and the broad fraternity which slights no flower in the garden of the Lord.

But the spirit common to all Religions, that which is religion's very life, grows not so much in any knowledge about it, as in the feeling of each individual heart that it is the great Reality. Not what we can tell about the progress of the human soul upward but what power of growth is in ourselves. Our philosophy of re-

ligion may be perfect and yet religion find in us no fair exemplar. Our "views" may be small and poor, and yet our daily lives may show the majesty and beauty of the Eternal Truth and Right.

"Nor knowest thou what argument
Thy life to thy neighbor's creed has lent."

Man's thought about religion grows with all that enlarges his vision of truth, with all that greatens his devotion to righteousness, with all that sweetens and enriches his affectional life. Man's experience of religion itself grows by one thing only, the sincere and faithful striving toward the best each one sees and feels. Let us be grateful for the new thought, which has given us all in these later days grander views of the Sources and of the growth of religion than were common a generation ago.

But above all let us not forget what was well known to the generations of old, "That God is, and that He is the rewarder of them that diligently seek Him."

REASON IN RELIGION.

“WE may doubt the truth of any system of worship,” says Mr. Eddy, “that cannot weave into its service all truth of every science and department of human knowledge. Let us not forget that by human reason and experience we are to judge of all things mental and physical in this world. We must judge by human reason of our relations to God, and our relations to man, as well as of all matters pertaining to physical existence and the laws of nature. And when a theologian presents to us for our sanction and credence any doctrine or article of belief which violates our reason and common sense we must reject such as an insult to human reason. And if the sentiment or affirmation such a theologian may urge is also derogatory to the character of God, we may doubly resent it as an insult to the dignity of both God and man. I count the dogma of an eternal hell of torment a striking example of such a double insult to the character of both God and man. All such ideas are unfounded in experience and violate every dictate of reason and justice. Why will not mankind forever

cast aside the pessimistic and unreasonable idea that God has attached such conditions to His gift of life to man as would rob it of all its value!

"It is true that all sects are softening the expression of old dogmas. And many who still profess them I believe have secretly repudiated them for the most part; for as Matthew Arnold says in substance, 'Insincerity in teaching religious doctrines is the crime of the age.' In olden times Christians in their strong and fervent faith in the dogmas of the church felt it their duty to co-operate with God in His punishment of unbelievers by means of the fagot, the stake, the chain and the scourge! The Inquisition is a witness to the intense faith of many Christians of an earlier age in a cruel and revengeful God. These cruel methods of enlarging the church, and punishing those who will not join it, are now softened and changed. And the influences which lead toward the recognition of the human reason as the supreme judge of what it is right and wise to believe and to do are increasing every day. We have to-day newspapers and periodicals devoted to 'establishing religion upon a scientific basis,' and which take 'Truth for authority and not authority for truth.'

"In order that the intelligent apprehension of religion and the growth of a true religion may become universal, we must secure for all human-

kind, children as well as adults, perfect liberty in thinking. What greater service can we render to our children, than to teach them to think, to think for themselves. As the bird mother teaches her fledglings to use their wings to hop, and move their pinions and finally to soar, so in regard to their minds should we act towards our children. Whilst we honestly teach them the truest and best we know in the principles of morality and religion, yet in teaching them let us leave their minds free.

“We should give them to understand that while as parents we sincerely and honestly teach them what we ourselves believe, we do not seek to smother or bind their souls. Many children, by exercising the spiritual forces within them, arrive at a higher point of intelligence and goodness than their parents ever attained to; and there should be no jealousy, no opposition to this in the mind and heart of the parent. God, by planting disinterested love in the minds of parents, has willed the existence of a principle in the paternal mind which unwittingly operates in accordance with the divine principles of development and evolution. We might perhaps safely trust this natural action in parents toward their children were it not for the injurious principles and influence of the churches with fixed creeds of belief, requiring conformity to narrow, bigoted views, on threats of direful

consequences in this world, and in the world which they believe is to come. We must, however, be charitable towards the superstitious sects darkened in their minds; for as Christ said of His murderers, 'they know not what they do.'

"There are heights and depths in the laws of mind which are less understood than the laws of matter. In the laws of conscience, for instance, we are dependent upon education, and education depends upon circumstances which we create. In the construction of conscience in many cases, reason, the natural guide, is not permitted to govern, or rather is not developed by reflection and experience. For instance, the young thieves attached to a gang of robbers are taught as a matter of conscience to steal on every available occasion; and their consciences are wounded when they let slip an occasion of filching, and the public sentiment of the gang condemns them. The poor Hindu widow, who burns herself upon the funeral pile of her husband, does it in obedience to the laws of conscience created by a superstitious public sentiment. It may seem a hard doctrine to declare that in every case to act in accordance with an approving conscience carries with it the smile of God in the soul,—a melancholy smile it may be in the case of the young thief and the poor sacrificed widow,—but such is the law of conscience in

regard to sincerity, and it is just and must be so. God cannot in justice require of any human being to act contrary to the best he knows. The same law holds good with the intelligent as with the ignorant; we should all of us act honestly and sincerely in accordance with *the best we know*. Our Puritan Fathers in persecuting and hanging the poor Quakers did the best they knew.

"Hence it is of *vital importance* that we develop the spirit of intelligence and freedom in our plans of education, in our moral and religious principles. Let us never forget that we are free, and that an inevitable responsibility accompanies soul-freedom, and that we are guilty if we do not search diligently to find the truth in all questions of religion and morality. For unless we use the reason and reflecting powers with which we are endowed to correct erroneous views of religion, morality, justice in government and so on, we shall always be subjected to error. The evils of error can never be measured save by the new truth which is revealed. And we may well ask with Festus of old 'What is truth?' One fixed fact is that truth is of slow development, and its progress must be measured by the growth and influence of reason and experience.

"We have to judge of all things in this world by human faculties, more or less enlightened by reason and common sense. By these tests I

dare to judge of the Christian system of theology, and where it seems to conflict with the revelation of God's character in outward nature, to condemn that system as erroneous. We should consider without dogmatism those questions respecting religion which are of the highest import and interest, both to ourselves and to our children. We must decide by the light of our mental constitution the great questions concerning the character of God and our relations to him and the sentiments we should cherish and express toward him. And as the interest of all requires that the best guiding principles in all our relations with God and man should be adhered to, as far as we know them, all should be willing to meet amicably on the common ground of reflection, investigation and kindness.

"When the Roman Catholic Christian church was at the height of its power it was not safe for doubters, or those leaders of thought who first define the next step of progress, to think aloud. For freedom of speech in those times meant punishment by fagot and torture. In those days it seemed to ask too great sacrifice of any philosophic thinker to risk the penalty incurred by any criticism of the prevailing religious views. But some noble men did take those risks and received their martyrdom! By the efforts of these lovers and seekers of truth we have reached a stage when no religious

organization amongst us can forbid freedom of speech or check independent thought. But in our own day the systems of theology bar out the masses by the onerous unreasonable conditions which they annex to discipleship. Belief in repulsive dogmas and in a special order of ceremonies is still demanded of those who would become members of the church, which in our own land means the Christian church. And preachers do not ask us to study the grounds of the belief which they press upon our acceptance. Their tone is still imperative, 'Believe or you will be damned.'

"I would not have a religious society attach merit to belief nor demerit to unbelief; for both may be honest states of the mind in regard to the truth or error of what is presented to it for decision. If our minds are weighted, as all must admit is possible, with any degree of the ignorance and superstition bequeathed to us by our honest forefathers, how willing we should all be to revise and reexamine the grounds of our faith and guiding principles of action in religious matters!

"Every man's convictions should be stamped by his own reason and judgment, and packed away in his memory ticketed with the reasons for his faith. But all convictions supposed by any one to be true are likely to be modified: for in the evolution of thought there are no finalities.

The data of science, philosophy and religion are constantly changing with the onward progress of the human mind. No man can therefore conceive of any advance or amelioration in science, morals or religion that his own study has enabled him to make, which another man, wiser and better than he, may not improve upon.

“Man in every age is entitled to the best thought which experience, reflection and science ripen into wisdom as fruit is ripened by sunshine, showers and time.”

We end thus our quotations from Mr. Eddy's thought upon the topic of our present discussion, —Reason in Religion.

Reason, we say, is the “faculty of judging.” Reason in religion, then, is the use of this faculty of judging in all that relates to religious concerns. Judgment implies a power of discernment. And discernment implies intelligent observation and perception. Hence to exercise reason in religious concerns is to intelligently perceive the facts of nature and human life which relate to religion, to judge of them with discernment or discrimination, and to pass an independent opinion from conclusions arrived at by careful and rational methods. That all means that if one exercises his reason in religion, he—to use a most significant phrase of common speech—“makes up his mind” about religious matters precisely as he “makes up his mind” about the things which

relate to all other concerns of life. Reason is only educated "common sense!" And what is common sense? Common sense is that in the average man or woman which registers for the personal conduct of life results of general human experience. Common sense is the common *reason* about common things and common ideas. Common sense is the "balance wheel" of the ordinary nature, that which keeps it from running off on tangents of eccentricity and foolishness. We say often of a brilliant but erratic or ill-balanced person, "He has every sort of sense but common sense." We mean by this that although he has unusual ability to perceive and utilize the special elements of thought and life to which his individual nature allies him, he has less than the ordinary capacity to take advantage of these general elements of thought and life which are the "common-wealth" of all mankind. Common sense is, then, the faculty by which ordinary men and women see things in sensible fashion, put this and that together shrewdly, and so learn how to fit their own lives into the social organism with as little friction as may be, and with some measure of success in conduct and affairs.

Now the educated common sense which we call reason is simply that same acute observation, that same sensible balance of judgment, that same shrewd fitting of a part into the whole,

(which give ordinary men success in the lower elements of life), *trained* and brought to bear upon high questions. What man's common sense absorbs from general human experience, often unconsciously, and applies to the everyday problems of life, the reason of men in its free and trained exercise explains, enlarges, sets in right relation, *consciously*, and with philosophic statement, in application to the profounder questions of our existence.

Mr. Lecky has sketched for us in his masterly way the "Rise and Growth of Rationalism in Europe." And we see by his picture how this rationalism, which is simply the dependence upon trained reason, is the key to progress in thought and morals. And the rightful sovereignty of reason is acknowledged now-a-days by intelligent people, without fear, in every department of life save in religion. The only places where the human reason is decried as a dangerous and mischievous element in man's nature are pulpits and church conventions. [The daily newspaper, and the finest as well as the most ordinary literature of our time, calls constantly upon us to use our best and freest judgment. Art stimulates not only the imagination, but the critical faculty. And every element of charity and of social reform demands that we examine fearlessly the actual conditions of life and decide independently upon a course of theory and practice.

Reason
+
Intelligence

And to-day the way in which the common sense of the ages is condensed and explained by the free action of the trained reason is understood by every intelligent reader of history, save only in the department of religious history.

How has it been in government? The common sense of the oppressed for ages during monarchical rule saw clearly that something was wrong. The common sense of justice was outraged by the cruel exactions of kings and nobles. The common sense of human brotherhood was at work even in palaces, making the truly noble among the reigning classes uncomfortable in their superiority of place and power. And this common feeling which for ages never dared question the inherited belief in the "Divine Right of Kings," beat helplessly and with bitter complaint against the effects of that belief when carried into action. At last the reason of man applied to affairs of social order put this and that together, and declared that the something which all knew was wrong was that one class had too much power and others too little freedom under the monarchical form of government. And straightway what had for ages been known to be hurting was declared to be wrong. The reason of man put the extravagance, the licentiousness, the idleness, the cruelty of the reigning classes on the one side, against the

grinding poverty, the degradation, the overwork, the suffering of the lower classes on the other, and judged that the two were twin evils of a bad system of social order. And so, by the decree of reason, a new order of government, one recognizing more fully equality of human rights, was instituted. And do you not see that so long as men held slavishly to the tradition that Kings Ruled by Divine Right there could be no successful revolt against the cruel abuses of kingly power? Humble petition there might be when the oppression was too heavy and grievous to be borne in silence: appeal from religion and philanthropy to the magnanimity and generosity of kings and nobles in behalf of the suffering: but no uprising of an outraged human dignity to strike the conquering blow for its own emancipation from governmental abuses, until the idea of the Divine Right of Equal Justice was born.

—In government, what the common sense of man sought for ages to mitigate and make more tolerable by practical action, which was inconsistent often with the theory of government still loyally professed;—*that* the trained reason, by sharp and fearless questioning, by free investigation of actual facts, by balanced, firm judgment applied to real conditions without regard to traditions,—overthrew. So that to-day in this great and blessed country of ours we have the

grandest testimony to the beneficent action of the human reason that the world affords.

Now, just as in government our ancestors inherited the idea that the King's Right to power is of Divine origin, and must not, therefore, be assailed or sharply criticised, so in religion we have all inherited the idea that *our* Religion is of Divine origin in such sense that it is not subject for our free enquiry and for the judgments of our untrammelled reason. At one time, as you know, all our ancestors were members of the Roman Catholic church; and then loyalty to religion meant unquestioning acceptance of the interpretation put upon the Bible, the sacred book of the Christian religion—by an infallible church. But one day the human reason spoke through Luther, and declared that what the unrest and deep dissatisfaction of the common life for ages had testified had foundation in fact, namely, that the church was not infallible; for it worked evil as well as good, and many of its ministers and dignitaries were corrupt and wrought corruption in society. And straightway we had the Reformation; that great movement in thought and life which has shaped all the modern tendencies of our civilization. Then after Luther gave voice to reason's arraignment of the pretensions of Latin Christianity, the chief dogma of the church was changed. It had been "an infallible church to interpret and apply

a perfect Word of God." It now became "The open Bible ; each man his own guide through the Inspired Word."

Since the era of the Reformation "the open Bible" and "the right of private judgment" have multiplied Christian sects until the wisest cannot tell their number nor the most exact their variations. And each little hamlet in our land is made the scene of dividing rather than uniting elements of religion ; as the spires of Baptist and Methodist and Episcopalian and what not, bristle toward heaven ; more in defiance of each other, often, than in uplifting symbol !

Meanwhile the development of natural science—the vast increase of human knowledge in matters relating to our earth and to the universe, to the structure of animal and man, and to all the facts of physical life,—this has wrought a change in man's understanding in religious concerns which is vast beyond telling. Added to this, and outgrowth of it, is the increase of the critical faculty, which enables us to pick flaws in the supposed Infallible Record of our ancient faith. And added again to this is the manifold intellectual influence of association with peoples and literatures hitherto unknown, which predisposes us against any spirit of exclusive assumption in respect to any possession of our own.

To-day I venture the statement that the great majority of the membership of what are called the orthodox Christian churches, while professing allegiance to the ancient creeds and perhaps voting against their revision, hold them only by such elastic use of words as stretches them beyond all legitimate meaning.

The fact is, that the people of the churches have pretty generally outgrown their creeds. They do not really believe in eternal damnation; for each man saves those of his own family when they die, no matter what their belief may have been! And they do not really believe, as the creeds mean it, "that there is no salvation outside of Christ;" for the heroes and martyrs, like Abraham Lincoln, whom they send straight to glory, are as often rationalists in religion as they are "Christians" in the *technical* sense of that word.

They do not really believe in the Bible as the "only and perfect rule of faith and practice." For they no longer go to it expecting to find exact directions for all moral procedure and intellectual definition. When, for instance, questions respecting the care of the criminal or vicious or defective classes of modern society are up for discussion, our most orthodox people do not talk of the way that these things were managed in Jesus' time. They proceed to make up their minds about these great and perplexing

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questions as well as they can by the light of all the past and of all the present experience of mankind! And so of unnumbered elements of thought and conduct. The common sense of men and women dealing with daily problems goes straight at them with eyes open, even when they are problems which concern church life and church work. This common sense does not feel that in cases of difficulty and doubt it must shut its eyes and open the Bible at random, as some used to do, expecting a magical answer to a prayer for guidance. No, average men and women are to-day so wise in respect to the practical Art of the Religious Life that they deal with facts and inferences at first hand, and exercise their "faculty of judging" with great freedom; with inconsistent freedom for those supposed to be pledged to look backward only for light and help in the conduct of life.

Now, what the practical sense of ordinary men and women does for the Art of Religion, the educated reason is doing for the science and philosophy of religion! And to-day the voices are many and wondrous winning which fit the Word of Faith to the Life and Thought of this new day of growth!

To those who have never questioned the claims to supernatural powers made for the Bible and the Church, to those whom the Time-Spirit has not yet touched, there is no present need

of change. But all who have a double consciousness of living with one part of their brain in the past and one part in the present, need to come as fast as may be into this glad and conscious unity and freedom. For in so far as an outgrown statement of religious philosophy cramps a man's perception of the new truth which is constantly revealed, that creed is a hindrance to his intellectual growth, and therefore a hindrance to the highest development of Religion. And in the same way, in so far as an outgrown statement of religious philosophy cramps a man's ideal of right, which changing relations of social order should constantly enlarge, that creed is a hindrance to ethical progress, and so a hindrance to the higher development of Religion. And if an outgrown statement of religious philosophy is so far outgrown that it does not in the least hamper a man's thinking or doing, yet is still professed as present belief, though inconsistent with both his thinking and doing, then is the soul of Religion wounded at its centre. For only "he that speaketh the truth in his heart and speaketh the truth with his lips ascends the Holy Hill of the Lord."

I wish I could give you, friends, some adequate picture of the joy of those who have won a *conscious* freedom of spirit in religious concerns, some idea of the more effective power for service

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of the good, of those who have squared their religious philosophy with their intellectual outlook in all other directions.

A great teacher says "you get the best of a book not when it masters you, but when you master it." And it is profoundly true that we get the best of the Book we call the Bible, that one of the great religious classics of the world which is most deeply inwoven with our civilization, when we have outgrown all bondage to it and it has become to us "not dogma, but literature." And still more of the Religion which has been based upon the Bible; of that Christianity which is our inheritance,—“Only the free possess the land.” Much moral force, more intellectual power, and an enormous amount of affectional influence is worse than wasted when intelligent people try to make themselves believe what they really cannot, or try to pour into old words meanings they were never meant to hold. Do not mistake me here; I would use freely every avenue toward God, every uplifting symbol, every heavenward climbing trellis on which the soul of man has ascended, as *worship*, as literature, as song, as picture, as poem, as the effort of the imagination to portray the Hidden Soul of All. There is no form of worship but has something sacred in it. And the freer a man's thought is in religion the more his religious sentiment can become a citizen of all the world's

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temples. But the beliefs which have hardened into *dogmas*, and to which assent in formal words is required, these if they have use at all are like the Heavenly Manna of the pretty story of the tented Israelites, they must be "gathered fresh every morning" or they will cease to nourish.

Can you not see, friends, how faithless is he to the Ever-living God who dares not let go of one tradition of His passing lest he lose God himself, when He walks with all who are faithful day by day? Truth! Who dare say he has it when the heaven of heavens cannot contain it? And who shall dare reject hastily that which bears good evidence of being a part of truth, because it is revealed to-day instead of hundreds of years ago? Right! What man is he who knows all that word means? And who shall dare, then, silence harshly the later prophets who declare "*now* is the accepted time, and now the day of salvation?" Love!

"Immortal Love! Forever full,
Forever flowing free,
Forever shared, forever whole—
A never-ebbing sea!"

Where is the heart that really trusts but knows that all of Love that ever "stooped to share our sorrow and our joy" is here and now at hand, to comfort and to bless?

Be not afraid, O ye of little faith. The unrest of our intellectual life to-day in religious concerns is only "Spring's delicious trouble in the ground;" harbinger of a fuller harvest of thought to be!

The stress and strain of moral problems which now perplex us are but the "growing pains" of a developing social order!

The seeming "eclipse of faith" which now shadows some souls is but the "covered bridge" leading to more confident trust, to brighter light.

MAN'S FREEDOM AND RESPONSIBILITY: OR CHARACTER IN RELIGION.

"SINCE mind," says Mr. Eddy, "is concomitant with all organized matter in all nature, the degree and quality of mind in each organized being is in exact accordance with the sphere in which that organized being is intended to move. By the operation of this law, which was not instituted by the organism itself but by a higher Power, it cannot swerve from the orbit of its sphere. Therefore human liberty, which I believe to be absolute under Divine Laws in its own department of life, is limited, like that of all organized existence both beneath and above man, to the sphere of man's own powers and duties. Liberty is a power or quality of the human mind; and through this power of liberty, or the ability to shape our own action toward ends which the reason perceives to be good, comes the ability to make progress.

From the godlike power of the liberty of the human mind proceeds its activities. From its

activities, con-jointly with the faculty of memory, comes experience; which, by the aid of reason, impels to improvement. Without freedom and liberty to act as we wish there could be no vice and no virtue among men. All our acting and even our thinking would in that case be but the exercise of some arbitrary power outside our own natures. The belief in the doctrine of "necessity," i. e. that a human being must do what he or she does do, when carried out in practice is, it appears to me, one of the most erroneous and destructive that the mind can conceive. To the mind accepting this doctrine human responsibility has no meaning, virtue and vice have no meaning. If the believer in necessity believes in Justice then he should believe that the consequences attendant on virtue and vice ought to be the same. Why should virtuous conduct be productive of happiness and vicious conduct be productive of misery? Why, if the virtuous and vicious *must* do as they *do* do, have we any need of human tribunals of justice, of any Judges or Juries? If there is any intelligent Power above the human it is a pity the believers in the doctrine of necessity cannot have a chance to give this High Power a lesson; for evidently, if that doctrine is true, God is in error; for he attaches effects to virtuous action which are both pleasant and encouraging to us to persevere in the guiding principles of con-

science, reason, and scientific research after the truth.

No; rounded and full to the measure of our being is the liberty accorded to man by nature; which is but another name for the Power above all nature and life. Natural and moral laws must be obeyed. Every man should be educated to understand, accept and obey these laws. Man is finding out the justice and necessity of their existence by bitter experience, but he is endowed with liberty to so act as to place himself in harmony with these laws and so ensure his well being and happiness. By study and attention to the law of heredity his children may be well constituted; and through obedience to the law of health man may with care be preserved to old age. Let us see to it that every child is educated, physically, mentally and morally. Let us keep children in the path of duty. And above all, if by reason of our own disobedience to God's laws severe consequences of suffering come upon us, let us not impugn the justice of God; but rather, exercising confidence and love, seek to learn how to avoid such calamities in the future.

The limitations or bounds of our human freedom and will are as wide as the world we live in and as extended as are human activities and human relations. Within these bounds we are responsible for evil conditions and to this extent we may co-operate with God in helping mankind to attain more and more perfect condi-

tions. There is a power in human organization, and it pertains to human liberty to organize for good or for evil. Altho thought and purpose are so free and unhindered in the individual that no other can even know what passes in a man's mind, the consequences of acts resulting from his most secret purposes are shared by all related to him. No man's virtuous acts result in good for himself alone; and no man can commit a crime without injuring the well-being of his family, of the community in which he lives, and the nation to which he belongs. So that individually we are affected by and affect society. A virtuous or an evil act, like a pebble dropped into the calm surface of a pond, sends an influence to the outward verge of the social organism.

"Truly it is said 'By their works ye shall know them!'

"We know the nature of God by His work of kindness and wisdom.

"Each man is known by the deeds of his life.

"I would that the great principles of justice, kindness and a reasonable charity to all might be universally recognized, taught and practiced.

"*'Noblesse oblige'* is the motto of the Noble who, in a conspicuous position of power and dignity, feels that he must act in harmony with the grandeur of his opportunity. True nobility obliges any man set apart as richer, more in-

telligent or more powerful in any way than his fellows, to act justly and kindly toward all other men. On the other hand no one can say that an humble life is not a noble life ; it is only a life whose possible nobleness has not been revealed by publicity. And no one can tell what undeveloped powers may be in the humblest man until some great crisis of personal or public experience tries him.

"In every human mind God has reserved for himself a little field of influence which we call Conscience. Conscience is the Ought to which every human mind assents. But altho' God has thus given us a sense of what is right and wrong he does not interfere with our freedom under this law. God permits us to violate our conscience ; and He permits the conscience itself to be modified and affected in its action by influences of education, by self-reflection and self-discipline, by the influence of parents, of teachers, of ministers and of all whom we love and respect, and by all the varied effects of the social organism upon the individual life.

Inasmuch as man is given intelligence, an intuitive sense of justice or the law of right in the conscience, and his memory of the experience of good and bad effects of actions, he has great obligations laid upon him to both know and do the right.

"To secure an enlightened conscience we

must have an education in truth and right, beginning with good and intelligent parents, and continued by wider social influences, for every individual.

"Let us each and all cultivate in ourselves and in our children acquaintance with the God within us, the conscience which frowns or smiles as we do wrong or right! The measure of our intimacy with God, the character of the principles which guide us, are shown by our daily life. If reason and love rule us it will be revealed by acts of kindness, respect and consideration toward our fellow-men.

"And in our relations with God not only is our Divine Father to be honored by dedicating memorial churches, by grateful acknowledgments and by that warmth of heart-love growing out of our consciousness that we are the objects of His generous, disinterested care, but more than all we should honor Him to the full power of human freedom and will by co-operating with Him in advancing the well-being of humanity.

"I believe that we find the law of human conduct in the revelation of the will of God as made in the laws which govern man's nature. Our liberty is restrained and limited in matters of physical life. The physical laws of nature are indeed protective and show the paternal character of God, as upon obedience to them depends our safety, even life itself. And it

is becoming almost universally accepted as a fundamental truth that obedience to the laws of the moral nature constitutes virtue and confers the happiness which alone follows upon virtue.

"In other words, God has so constituted man that the performance of his highest duties, when actuated by the highest principles of his nature, secures to him the greatest amount of happiness possible to him in this world.

"A good and virtuous human being never enquires 'Is life worth living?' He lives happily from day to day. A good and intelligent man is sincere, kind and charitable toward his fellows; not for the sake of any return from man, but because he feels he ought so to act; and because God has so constituted him that his own highest happiness and dignity are subserved by cultivating these virtuous actions. We have the power to do good in this world or to work evil. Shall we not make ourselves coadjutors with God to work with Him to make ourselves and others good and noble, since He permits us so to carry out His kind intents? Whilst God through and by His laws sustains all things, man is specially endowed with freedom and power to progress, to improve and to perfect, or to retard, corrupt and destroy. Only by obedience to the laws of God, as shown in nature, and in natural human relations, may

we co-operate with our Divine Father in doing good.

"And if to make two blades of grass grow where only one has grown before is commendable, how much more so is it to discover and exemplify and teach a virtue lost sight of or before unknown! And equally commendable is it to brighten up old and accepted virtues and to place them in a better light, that they may appear more attractive!"

In arranging the series of initial services in this Chapel we have tried to present, as clearly as might be, in the sketchy and incomplete manner alone possible when traversing so wide a range of thought, the spirit and tendency out of which this movement toward religious association sprang, and toward which it must, if consistent with its founder's wishes, develop. And to-day in seeking to mass in one topic the vast double problem of the personal and the race element in morals we must limit ourselves to the merest hint.

The question of man's freedom of will forms a vital part of ethical enquiry. The problem of how far a human being is *responsible* for his actions, lies at the basis of personal condemnation or praise, or personal example and appeal. And how far the actions of a man witness to his faith or faithlessness is indeed a pivotal question in religion.

To our friend, Mr. Eddy, these two questions were settled so far as he apprehended their meaning. He had outgrown the "necessarianism" of the balder Calvinism: he never accepted the more complex and subtle "necessarianism" of certain scientific teaching. To him the appeal of religion seemed truly philosophic and all-prevailing. He did not believe with the old theology that God had "elected" any to damnation nor to glory; but that each person "must work out his own salvation." He did not believe, on the other hand, that the theory of "evolution" made the will of a man of no effect, that "heredity" and "environment" relieved any one of the awful responsibility which attaches to man as a moral being,—a being who may do right and who may do wrong as he himself wills. Mr. Eddy's statement of human free will and liberty may seem to many extreme; but in the main it is that which has been the keynote of every religion which has nerved men to the highest moral advance.

The philosopher may say with Emerson when he philosophizes, "if you wish to reform a man you must begin with his grandfather," and so he will state a terrible truth, and an encouraging one as well. But the preacher will say with Emerson when he preaches,—

"When Duty whispers low, 'Thou must,'
The youth replies, 'I can.'"

The scientist may say with the witty Dr. Holmes, "every disease, physical and moral, may be cured if the physician is only called *in time* ; but 'in time' is often several generations before the patient is born." And here again the hard but helpful truth is spoken. But the religious teacher leaps over and through these facts of the effect of a man's inherited and surrounding circumstance upon his nature, and says, "Be ye perfect here and now." "If thy right eye offend thee pluck it out." "Behold if any one shall apply himself unto virtue I have not seen the day when he was not sufficient unto the task." And there is something in all of us which responds right nobly to the call to master all that is evil, both within and without. Whatever may be the inferences from scientific studies in some directions, whatever the effect of the Whole upon the Part may seem at times to be, there is an indestructible belief in us that in the soul of man is a power of self-betterment.

Dr. Maudsley himself, whose acute observation sometimes seems to make of man but a puppet of circumstance, has given us that noble book which so reinforces religious appeal, "Responsibility in Mental Disease." A book which in its very title bears witness to something in man which can be appealed to confidently for self-help and for world-help. And this something in man, which men even like Dr. Maudsley believe in

appealing to, lies at the basis of morals, both in the personal and social significance of the word. The moral law dances off into mist if there is no moral nature in man which may consciously and of purpose obey such law. And whatever may be our philosophy of ethics, however we may define the genesis of the moral nature or write its history, we may be all agreed in one practical point, namely, that somehow, and somewhere, and sometime, man found out that there were such things as Right and Wrong, and that he Ought to choose the Right and flee the Wrong with all his heart and mind and strength. And if he Ought, then he can; with fear and trembling may be, with weakness and failure often, with foolishness of blunder and half understanding of ignorance always, but with growing power and success! And what is true of mankind as a whole is true of each man and woman and child.

One man's possibility of virtue may be so far short of another's, that no one praises it as virtue at all. But at the foot of the hill one may begin to climb; and must begin there, if anywhere, if he is *born* there. And if one nears the top he must still climb; and perhaps the harder that the summit grows steep and rugged, and the sun hot with mid-day strength. And in spite of inherited beliefs which have blurred the doctrine of man's freedom and responsibility toward the moral law, in spite of new ideas of "environment"

and new "data of ethics," there is a growing conviction that "conduct is three-fourths of life," that character is the main thing, that to be good is to be Godlike, and that goodness is the only essential of true religion. Many who show by their judgments and practical living that they really believe all this, do not yet consciously see what that belief implies in respect to the philosophic statement of religion in its personal and world aspects. But "all the churches are growing practical," we all say. What does that mean? Simply that all serious-minded people, whatever their professed dogmas may be, are turning their attention more and more toward making people better and wiser and happier and freer from bad conditions. And the growth of what we call the "liberal" spirit in religion is as much due to this practical tendency, to this increased devotion to conduct, as to any intellectual changes.

Universalism was a *moral* revolt from Calvinism. "Could God be Father, as Jesus said He was, and damn His children?" This was the question the early Universalists asked; and to ask it was to answer it sooner or later with the Quaker poet, "Nothing can be good in God which evil is in me." And Unitarianism, with all its refinement of taste, with all its literary exclusiveness and intellectual tendency of influence, was pre-eminently a vindi-

cation of and an appeal to the moral nature of man. The Friends, with their simple gospel of fidelity to the "inner light"—the Friends, whose saintliness has blessed a world which never knew them,—the Friends, also, bore their testimony to the authenticity of the Soul's message from the Infinite in a beauty of holiness which has leavened great masses of dull and bestial life in this and other lands! From many quarters of the religious world the news has spread that it is not technical "conversion" which insures soul-health; that still less does assent to dogmas prove that a man is citizen of the heavenly kingdom; but that this rather is true, whoso reveals soul-health in a pure life "void of offence," warm and helpful toward all good on this earth, is saved already and stands a king and a priest to God. The great anti-slavery movement in America contributed wonderfully to the growth of this idea of character as the real test and aim in religion. It taught a whole great people to see that whatever may be the false show of things when "Right is on the scaffold and Wrong is on the throne," still "Right is Right, and right the day must win; to doubt it is disloyalty, to falter is a sin."

To-day it is greatly needed for the better and quicker helping of men and women enslaved to evil and ignorance that the mighty powers of the Christian church should be liberated fully

and consciously from all bondage; both that which cramps the intellectual growth, and that which fetters the moral sense. It is not enough that with a confused and confusing double vision the great body of the Church profess that salvation is of the next world, while at the same time it acts as if salvation were of this world. This inconsistency, useful as it is, is but the bridge from one point of clear vision to another. What is wanted is that with no ifs and buts, and with no cowardice or shrinking, men and women everywhere should declare that he is saved who is good and whose life is helpful to all the better side of other's lives; and that he is in danger here and now who is cruel or selfish or vicious, who is narrow in sympathy or low in aim. What is needed above all things to strengthen and concentrate the influence of the better life in every community against the evil in that community is the feeling, united and powerful, that men *can* make themselves better, and that to seek and follow the good is the one *vital* thing in life. And the hope is that this little effort towards religious association here may emphasize that truth.

It seems to us that in an age when, by reason of new ways of looking at things and new wealth of knowledge, all preconceived notions stand on trial for life before the enlight-

ened judgment, they weight themselves as foolishly, as needlessly, who stop to ask liberty of the past to study freely either the past or present. It seems to us that in an age, when, by reason of changes in social order coming with bewildering rapidity, every old maxim of conduct must be tested by wholly new conditions, they confuse their moral judgment and lessen their moral power as dangerously, as unwarrantably, who defer to aught save a free and reverent listening for to-day's revelation of Right. We want here to call together a company of people whose watchword, confessed and ringing with confident assertion, shall be, "Character the aim and test in Religion; to make men good and happy the business of a Church."

And though this little Chapel never assume the Christian badge, and though it were denied the sympathy of every Christian church in this community, if it were truly bound in deed as in word to this gospel, it would have more right to claim kinship with the spirit of Jesus than any Church amongst us which puts the creed above the life and sneers at "mere Morality." Listen to the crack of the whip with which Jesus drove the moneychangers from the Temple! Hear the terrible denunciations he sent to the very centre of the "orthodox" church of his day against the pretences of those who "made long prayers, yet devoured widows' houses," who put

the profession of faith above the doing of the simple right! Listen to the Sermon on the Mount, which is extolled by thousands who stone the new prophets who seek to make its lessons real to-day for to-day's needs and opportunities!

Hundreds of thoughtful people now find themselves out of touch with the great body of the Christian Church because it is infidel to the teaching of him whom it calls Lord and Master, infidel to him whose ethical passion was as a consuming flame against all that hurt the soul, infidel to him whose love for man, his brother, matched his trust in God his Father. And thousands of poor and sorrowful and burdened and sinful souls feel themselves neglected to-day by the great body of the Christian Church because—while the rich and successful and wise are ministered to—they hear no helpful gospel. It is a pitiful commentary on the life of the Church that on Sunday only are its chief Temples lighted and warmed, and then for the few, while the multitude are won to the haunts of vice by every-day cheer and fraternal feeling! I do not speak in any bitterness. This is no question of "Orthodox" and "Liberal." This is a question of religious or not religious, faithful or faithless, believing or infidel! He who puts aught before the doing of one's duty here and now, hides the entrance to the Holy of Holies! He who puts aught before love to his brother man, even that

which *he* calls Love to God, veils that East window of the soul which earliest lets in the light of day!

The business of a Church is to make true and noble men and women. If it can not do that it has no call to existence in a world where the faithful must forever war against the hosts of evil! The office of Religion in the heart of each man and woman is to cleanse from bodily sins, to purify the heart, to uplift and strengthen the moral nature. If that which one calls his Religion does not do these things he is mistaken about it and the Spirit of Life is not in him. Said Dr. Channing—whom we honor here with Emerson, High Priest of True Religion, and Parker, the fiery-hearted and devout Reformer—“The true love of God is the same thing with the love of virtue, rectitude and goodness.” And again, “The grand heresy is to substitute anything, whether creed or form or church, for *character*, for goodness, which is essentially, everlastingly and by its own nature, lovely, glorious, divine!”

Said Charles Darwin—Servant in Truth's Temple, and so honored here with the rest of God's Teachers—said Charles Darwin when indicating his agnostic position in respect to the Mysteries of Life—“But at least a man can do his duty.”

And at most, we ask, what can a man do more?

“ That man is great,—and he alone
Who serves a greatness not his own
For neither praise nor pelf:
Content to know and be unknown,
Whole in himself.

“ Strong is that man, he only strong,
To whose well ordered will belong
For service and delight,
All powers that in the face of Wrong
Establish Right.

“ And free is he, and only he
Who from his tyrant passions free
By Fortune undismayed,
Hath power upon himself to be
By himself obeyed.

“ If such a man there be, where e'er
Beneath the sun and moon he fare,
He cannot fare amiss.
Great Nature hath him in her care;
Her cause is his.

“ He holds by everlasting law
Which neither chance nor change can flaw;
His steadfast course is one
With whatsoever forces draw
The Ages on.”

FELLOWSHIP IN RELIGION.

“THE most effective method,” said Mr. Eddy, “of sustaining any system of thought or religion is *organization*; which includes the teaching of children by all parents and teachers of what is esteemed by them to be the truth. Recognizing that the highest well-being of all demands of each a pure, just and honorable life, we deem it for the best interests of society that men unite in the formation of religious associations for co-operation in the extension of knowledge and virtue. It is necessary for our growth that the best guiding principles of religion and morality should be fixed in our minds. And to this end it is necessary that we study and reflect upon them, repeating them in various forms of expression; but trying always to convey the *essence* of the principles by which we should be governed. Especially is this course of frequent repetitions of accepted truths necessary in regard to the education of children. Parents should feel bound to bring up their children in such manner as will ensure their own well-being in this world, and that of all who may

be connected with them in close relations of life. And they should be taught an ever-widening interest in mankind, until they can say as did that noble man, Thomas Paine, 'The world is my country; my countrymen are all mankind.'

"We are beginning to realize and use our God-given right of soul liberty to investigate and discover all of truth as best we may. May each Christian sect claim and maintain its right to differ, according to its honest convictions, from all other Christian sects. And may all those outside of any church organization claim and maintain entire freedom of thinking and of speech on these important questions of religion, on all suitable occasions. Clear convictions of the truth can only be arrived at by study of facts and by serious reflection; and when an individual claims to be convinced, or to have real convictions, it is not in order for another to question his results so far as they pertain to himself. There is great diversity of mind and heart; and this is well. The honest and true convictions of each and every thoughtful mind must be arrived at by and through its own mental labor. Our rule should be to adopt nothing which has not been passed through the analysis of the laboratory of our own minds. In the religious and moral duties the mental inspiration of the day and hour in which we live will suffice for the needs and demands of that day and hour. But

the progressive changes of the human mind are and ought to be guarded and slow.

"Our creed should be made up of true principles of thought and conduct; and I see no objection to noting down in the form of constitutional principles, or a creed of beliefs, the honest convictions of to-day by those who would form a Religious Society.

"Why can not all stand on a platform of the truest and noblest principles the head and heart can conceive of in our day and generation? We may do this, and yet admit that there is nothing now conceived in science, morals and religion which may not in time be improved upon. We should hesitate to affirm finalities in regard even to the most rational of the accepted truths of the hour in which we live. Like time, the natural course of our intelligence and knowledge is onward, not backward, nor even standing still. We write our creeds *to-day*, comprising the highest principles of action towards God and man that we can conceive of. We crystallize in our moral and religious beliefs the best thoughts, the noblest truths of *to-day*. And let us have a prominent article of our faith that as human thought and experience develop new truth we may *add to* or *modify* our old articles of faith. When our creeds perfect us then they may be considered as finalities.

"We believe in the divine influence of intelli-

gence and nobility of mind, and of the unselfish emotions of the heart, wherever found. And in a religious society we should have no desire to diminish in any sect the religious sentiment or devotional spirit; far otherwise! We should aim to increase and purify this spirit of devotion by presenting a truer object of inspiration, and by giving sound reasons for the cultivation of the religious sentiment."

We close here our quotations from Mr. Eddy's writings.

Fellowship in Religion. Our subject may well be divided into three parts: *Fellowship*, Fellowship in *Religion*, Fellowship within and without *Our Religious Home*.

Human Fellowship, in the broadest sense of the words, rests upon the great fact of life that the things wherein men are alike are greater than the things wherein they differ. Beneath all divisions into class and color and race and condition we strike the bedrock of human unity. Just as beneath all the multiform shows of Nature we strike, if we go deep enough, a unity of law and substance. "The solidarity of the human race" is the ethical phrasing of the science of evolution: and it is the modern translation of the New Testament gospel, "We are all members one of another."

Fellowship in Religion is the recognition of the unity of mankind in its highest life.

Fellowship *within* our religious home: Fellowship *without* our religious home: What do these words mean? Let us see.

Take a score of the most devout and intelligent men and women from as many different Christian sects in America, and set them all to talking of the "Unity of the Spirit which is the bond of peace" in Religion, and they will very likely all talk much of the underlying likeness of all faiths: and of the "sympathy of Religions," at least within Christian lines. But when the talk is ended each will go his way, labeling himself as precisely as ever with his badge of denominationalism, and seeking to fasten it upon others as before. Get together "Union Meetings" by the dozen all over this city during the "Week of Prayer," and everybody who speaks or listens will be glad of the fraternal touch with neighbor sect. But when the set meetings are over, no Calvinist Baptist may admit the more readily to his "Communion" privilege his devout brother Congregationalist; no Presbyterian will abate his "Confession" of one hard dogma: and not a Methodist will perhaps seem less clannish than before.

Call a meeting of the "Evangelical Alliance" with its motto, "In Essentials Unity: In Non-essentials Diversity: In all Things Charity." And the Unity and Charity will be emphasized, the divisions resulting from diversity will be

obscured as the air rings with the words, "The things we hold together;" "Our Common faith;" "A united front to error and sin," and the like. But straightway the meeting is over no Episcopalian will open his pulpit to the most saintly brother unless ordained in his way; and not one may seem the more inclined to organic union if it involves any sacrifice of *his* sect prejudice.

Says the good Methodist brother in the quaint story, talking of "Christian Union:" "It's a shame for Christians to fight and quarrel so, cutting themselves up into little knots and rings! Why can't they all use their common sense and be good, straightforward Methodists?" And in less transparent simplicity most sectarians show that their idea of religious unity is for everybody to adopt their views!

Now why is this? Not that these people are hypocrites or fools. It is more than all else because the sect feeling, large and small, is the *home* feeling in religion. It may be a palace home of grand proportions, even all the broad Christian Communion. And then, however a man may like to travel in foreign lands of faith, and taste the food of Confucius, Bhudda or another, he is glad always to get home again; and likes best to stay where all high thoughts and aspirations translate themselves in Christian terms.

The home, on the other hand, may be a small cottage of faith, even one so tiny that the essential thing seems the quantity of water it takes for baptism, or the shape of the garment worn by its minister, it is still, perhaps all the more dearly, Home. And a very short visit to a very near neighbor's house of worship makes the timid homekeeper fearful lest all should not go well in his absence !

The various sects of Christendom represent the natural differences in men's ways of looking at things crystallized into institutions by the theologians. And where one will go and stay to find a home is determined chiefly either by early training or temperamental affinity.

No one is obliged by any dictum of conscience to leave a house of faith which suits him, and go off on a voyage of religious exploration to settle in some unfamiliar Temple-House ; or perhaps seek his Trysting-Place with the Spirit only in solitary places, when he really belongs with the rest of the folks. The only essential for growth in human Fellowship in Religion is that one look wide enough abroad to see that others can rightfully feel at home in those unfamiliar Temple-Houses, and others still in the solitary wild meet God face to face ! Yes, more is essential :—That one study bravely enough and deeply enough to make sure that he really belongs in the House he dwells in ; and that it is

large enough to let him grow all he can ; and that it does not crowd his neighbor's House unfairly !

Looking over the whole field of Religious thought and effort in America, to-day, there seem to be four grand divisions sufficiently differentiated, in large outline, to make separate organization justifiable.

These are the Trinitarian or Evangelical Christian : the Unitarian Christian : the Rationalistic Theists with Free Religious bases of Union : and the Ethical Culturists who aim to put all their affirmation of the Highest in Life in terms of such abstract reserve that the conscientious Agnostic may use them. The main army of Christians is of course that marked "Evangelical." It is an army doing grand service in countless directions of devotion to God and service to man. It saves and helps innumerable poor and feeble and defective of the children of men, otherwise orphaned and desolate. It makes warm hearthfire Altars of Worship for multitudes otherwise unsheltered and unblest. Whether or not its leaders, or its rank and file always name themselves sincerely is not our question to-day. But granted that all is honest and true in the main creed of this main army of Christendom, are all the sub-divisions of creed which separate this main army itself into sections, often antagonistic sections, either necessary or useful ?

I cannot think they are. If Union Meetings and Evangelical Alliances do so much good, if dwelling upon the things which unite is found so helpful now and then in meetings, and always in humanitarian work, why in the name of common sense and business economy of force, cannot the *organization* be upon the large and not the small things of faith? How many a struggling little church in some small place is hopelessly broken down by the opposition of another, of an Evangelical sect so like its own that one accustomed to large views of Religion must use a microscope to see the difference. How much force so sadly needed in helping sinful, struggling, despairing men and women toward some Worship and Goodness is spent in keeping the denominational fences in repair. Fences within the Evangelical lines, remember, and useful if at all in keeping apart those so nearly related they seem to belong together. I believe if that spirit of limited Fellowship in Religion, which finds expression in great union meetings and efforts to do good within the Evangelical lines, could but rule the daily life and official action of the Orthodox leaders, the result would be a revival of real religion in this country, and in the whole Christian world, beyond anything yet experienced, and would be helpful to a wider circle of people than any other one thing. By such a bond of union upon

the simple elements of faith common to all Evangelical Christians there could be sub-division of that vast army for *Service* and not for idle creed tinkering ; and, while keeping all the true home-feeling, that "more stately mansion of the soul" might shelter millions now unchurched.

The Unitarian Christian marks a departure from the Evangelical creed, even when reduced to its simplest terms, so great that it rightfully justifies separate housekeeping. The rule of all righteous organization of mankind is "first pure" and just, "then peaceable." The rule of helpful religious homebuilding is first sincere, and suited to personal needs, and then beautiful with fraternal hospitality. The vast body of orthodox Christianity, even if it were bound together by the large rather than the small elements of faith, would still feel cold and dreary if aught should separate from allegiance to Christ as the Divine incarnation. The Unitarian would find it equally impossible to cumber with such mysticism his human discipleship of the Elder Brother, his simple faith in Christianity as *our* special revelation of the Universal Religion, and the world's most perfect and helpful faith. Therefore the Evangelical and the Unitarian belong in separate although not in hostile households.

The Unitarian Christian body, counting the central majority of its membership as its most

characteristic expression, is that which to-day in America represents, I believe, the most widely and practically useful liberal element in Religion. Its combination of rational criticism, historic continuity, ethical life and teaching and refined and spiritual forms of worship is suited to enlightened minds. And now that that body for the first time in its history has entered upon a period of organization and missionary effort, we may look with certainty for a vast and rapid increase in its power and influence. All things considered, I have no doubt that the greatest religious needs of the largest number of progressive people in our America are met by that Unitarian affirmation.

The birth of the Free Religious Association, however, and of similar movements, bear witness to the fact that there are men and women who hold a pure and simple Theistic concept of the Universe, a Morality based upon common human experience and a worship of the Highest with no required prefix, Christian or other!

Lastly come those who in Ethical Culture Societies not only put their bond of union in these abstract forms of speech, but refrain from public Worship, and discard all theological affirmations.

To my thought the varied organization of the Liberal element in Religion along these three lines is both right and useful.

Within the Evangelical Christian body analysis and differentiation have been carried indeed to their ultimate ends; often to a repulsive and wasteful extreme. It is time for the main army of Christianity to synthesize, to harmonize, to combine in a mutual benefit "Trust" which shall at once broaden and strengthen its position. But the natural, undogmatic, "radical" or "Root" element in Religion has only so lately begun to express itself in Christendom that it would be quite outside the usual law of growth if it could, at first, unite all sensitive to its influence in one bond of organization.

The Friend who has opened for us this Religious opportunity of Bell St. Chapel occupied a somewhat unique position in the Liberal Faith. He stood with the worshipping Theists both inside and outside the Unitarian body. But he wished to bear neither the Unitarian nor the Christian name. Nor, on the other hand, did he feel able conscientiously to accept the abstract Bond of Union which the Free Religious position asserts. He was not only a worshipping Theist, he was a Theist of creedal affirmation. He believed in a Church of the Living God, and he thought such a Church should not only assume God in Service of Praise, it should declare Him, and allegiance to Him, in basis of organization. To Mr. Eddy, lack of such Theistic declaration in

the Bond of Fellowship, made Worship less consistent, and was a treason to Religion itself. I do not feel on this point as our Friend did. To me the position in the Liberal Religious world, not most practically, but most *philosophically* strong is that of a citizen of the World's Temples whose sentiment soars in all higher forms of aspiration known to men, but who so separates religious sentiment from dogma that his chosen bond of union with others is as impersonal and abstract an allegiance to the Best in Life as can be framed. Hence I cannot share Mr. Eddy's philosophical objection to the Free Religious Society's basis of organization. But Liberal Religious Societies with the Theistic affirmation in both creed and worship (such a double affirmation as Mr. Eddy wished made here in this place), may have strength of local influence, warmth of attraction and a sufficient breadth of union. And for the sake of this broad and practical usefulness I gladly do what in me lies to help start here a Church of the Universal Fatherhood which shall in prose of creed, as well as in poetry of worship, declare its belief in God, and its purpose of service to man.

And my Ethical Culture Brother, to whom such personalized conceptions are forbidden, alike in prose and in poetry, what shall I say of him? He has stripped from the ancient Temple of Faith its Altar, as well as all adornment of

mythical picture and allegory. And he has inscribed on its bare walls the four-square legend:—"Learn Truth. Teach Truth. Be Good. Do Good."

What shall I say of him? That I am heartily glad he has built a place where he can feel at home and where thousands to whom the Churchly element is not attractive may learn to revere the "Sacred Ought in Man." If I see, as I think I do, that when he reaches in glowing speech the heights of Goodness and Truth he touches the heart of an Infinite Love also, to which our hearts are so allied that none but poetic Personalities can name It, I am neither grieved nor vexed that he does not see it.

If to strip his Religious Purpose of garments of beauty I love, makes him feel stronger—as an athlete preparing for the fight—to war against Wrong, that is his affair; and so long as he works in harmony with that "Power not ourselves which makes for Righteousness," I am glad to feel kinship with him. And I believe that now we are at the point in thought and morals where he can help in ways many of us cannot.

Standing where I do in Religion I can Fellowship all who will Fellowship me. Is the name Religion vaster and yet dearer to me than its "given" name Christian? Truly it is. But if my Brother on the Left puts into his word Christian

all I mean by my word Religion, as so many do, shall I wince when he talks, or think the less of his brave and beautiful words? I trust not. If he can stand my want of a surname I can surely bear with his filial love for our common family inheritance of faith. Do the words, Truth, Right, Love, standing all alone, seem nobler in completeness, more far-reaching in significance, than with any prefix, even Christian? Truly they do to me. But if my Brother asks me to join him in Truthseeking and in Right-living and in Loving helpfulness, I am not troubled that he always calls such "Christian work." There is so much more in that prefix Christian than has ever yet been lived out, that it is more a question whether I am worthy of such a badge than whether my brother makes a mistake in wearing it!

On the other hand, do the words, God, Soul, Religion, Immortality, all the root words of Worship, seem dear to me and right to use, however they may have been surcharged with superstitious meanings or coarse conceptions? Aye, truly they do. And my place is with those who can no more help giving wing to the Spiritual Imagination than a flower can help turning toward the sun. But if my Brother on the Right shrinks from using any of these words, and limits himself to such literal phrasings of man's nobler nature as the logical

faculty alone suggests, what of that? If he puts a reverent Silence—not a boisterous and rude outcry—but a reverent Silence in place of my Worship, and if moreover he listens in that reverent Silence closely and tenderly for the cry of human need and the Word of human helpfulness, then, if he can endure my prayer, I can be glad of his Silence if it helps him more than speech!

Fellowship in Liberal Religion, my friends, goes both ways, or it is not true Fellowship.

Fellowship in Religion is to keep the Unity of the Spirit in the bond of Peace all around the World of Faith and Service.

Fellowship within our own Religious Home is that near and dear tie of those who believe so much alike that they can be one in all things of word and deed. This Fellowship, to be truly helpful, must be upon the large and not the small elements of belief and of service.

Fellowship without our own Religious Home is sympathetic understanding of those from whom we differ, constant effort to join on with them, and keep company, where we can, all the more that at some roadways we must unclasp hands and walk apart for Truth's sake.

Fellowship in Religion demands of no man that he make himself a "mush of concessions." Still less that he blur real and far-reaching distinctions for the sake of keeping step with the

main army. Least of all that he be-juggle with words, or trifle with austere sincerity, just to stay where it is snug and warm. No man has a right to be free-handed in hospitality when he is in debt and cannot feed his own family. And an all-round Fellowship in Religion is neither just nor honest until we have bought and paid for our own Household of Faith by strenuous search for our own religion and sincere speech about it.

First find your own place of Worship and of Service.

Then, *where you stand*, all you can, speaking your Religious Truth in love as in sincerity, doing your Religious Deed in fraternal feeling as in personal faithfulness, join effort with who-so also loves Truth and would do the Right wherever your hands can clasp each other's.

This, I take it, is the rule of Fellowship in Religion.

This is the Fellowship in Religion I must ever seek.

This is the Fellowship in Religion I hope may be manifest in this place.

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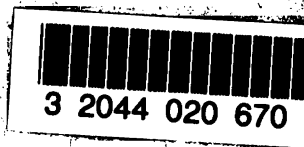
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